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MOLIÈRE

L'ÉCOLE DES FEMMES
L'ÉCOLE DES MARIS
MONSIEUR DE POURCEAUGNAC

MOLIÈRE

TRANSLATED BY Works

KATHARINE PRESCOTT WORMELEY

VOL. V.

L'ÉCOLE DES FEMMES
L'ÉCOLE DES MARIS
MONSIEUR DE POURCEAUGNAC

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INTRODUCTORY NOTES[1]

L'ÉCOLE DES FEMMES was represented for the first time at the Palais-Royal theatre, December 26, 1662, on which occasion Molière obtained once more a dazzling triumph. This comedy, says a chronicle of the time, "made their Majesties laugh till they held their sides."

But if admirers were plentiful, detractors were not few. They attacked the play in the name of good taste, morality, grammar, and, what was far more dangerous for the author, in the name of religion. Pious persons were offended; declaring that the scene in which Arnolphe attempts to indoctrinate Agnes was an "insolent parody of sermons; the last words reproducing almost verbatim the concluding benediction of a preacher." Even the Prince de

[1] Chiefly taken from "Notices Hist. et Lit. sur les Comédies de Molière," par Charles Louandre.

Conti, Molière's earliest patron, since become a fervent jansenist, says, in a treatise on modern comedy, "there is nothing more scandalous than the fifth scene of the second act of the 'École des Femmes,' which is one of our latest comedies."

Happily for Molière, Louis XIV. was on the side of his defenders, and Boileau, by way of compensation for the insults of criticism, addressed to him, as a New Year's gift on the 1st of January, 1663, certain laudatory stanzas in which the following well-founded prophecy appears: —

> "In vain a thousand jealous minds,
> Molière, dare, with dull contempt,
> To censure this fine work;
> Your charming naïveté
> Will still go on, from age to age,
> Rejoicing our posterity."

Opinions are, therefore, much divided; those of Fénelon, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Geoffroy, and others of his day being among the most severe. "Molière," says Geoffroy, speaking of the "École des Femmes," "has pandered to the taste of a period which sought to throw off the yoke of our ancient severity, and to bring the sexes more closely together. Gallantry, polite-

ness, and pleasures were confined to the court and the principal families of the state. The burghers and the people were still in a state of semi-barbarism; it was Molière who gave polish to the middle and lower classes; it was he who shook the old tenets of education, those props of our ancient morality; it was he who burst the fetters which held each class in the dependence of its own state and duty; and this impulsion given by him to the tendencies of his age contributed largely to his success."

M. Aimé-Martin, who allows no criticism on Molière to pass without endeavoring to refute it, declares that those who accuse him of giving a graceful tone to vice and a ridiculous and odious austerity to virtue have not sufficiently understood the play. "It is evident," he says, "that Molière intended to warn women against uniting their fate with that of an egotist. Arnolphe has but one object: he desires to subjugate youth, innocence, and beauty to the caprices of his arbitrary humor. Little he cares about the happiness of his wife; it is his own happiness that concerns him. This it is that causes his downfall; we see that all his efforts, his precautions, all the wiles of his egotism come to naught before the simple

common-sense of a girl. Molière is full of such teachings, — often unperceived by commentators, though they rouse the mirth of ordinary persons and make the best minds think. . . . In the 'École des Femmes' Molière desired to exhibit one of those men aloof from the tastes of youth more from natural austerity than from age, who yield, nevertheless, to every passion; who mistake the counsels of their own selfishness for those of experience, the most fantastic systems for the inspirations of wisdom, and who assume to change the eternal laws of Nature by subjecting all about them to their own caprices. Such is the character of Arnolphe. We should here remark that the development of this character forms the subject and the plot of the play. The simplicity of Agnes, the stupidity of the servants, the confidences of Horace, the arguments of Chrysalde are all intended to bring forth in full relief the cross-grained temper of this singular personage. His ridiculous system sets everything in motion; he alone bears the action of the play. Always on the stage throughout the five acts, he comes and goes, he schemes and scolds, and yet, though plainly warned, is quite unable to prevent what happens. His conduct is all slyness, deception,

and trickery; that of Agnes simplicity, naïveté, and ignorance. He tries to deceive and delude her, he exaggerates the benefits he has done her, and she simply opposes truth to falsehood; by showing the depths of her own heart she punishes her tyrant. That which makes the situation so living and the lesson so keen is the fact that Arnolphe's schemes serve only to produce his defeat. He wanted stupid servants, and his are dolts to excess; he wanted a fool in Agnes, and she has all the silliness of ignorance. She avows with equal simplicity her love for Horace, her indifference to Arnolphe, her desire for marriage, and, finally, when about to flee with her lover, 'she sees no harm in what she does.' What depth of meaning in that one line! It sums up the whole play; it justifies Agnes, confounds Arnolphe, and begins his punishment, for is she not at last precisely what he has sought to make her? . . . To make every one gather the fruit of their own works is the morality of the stage, and Molière never attained that end better than in the 'École des Femmes.'"

The "École des Maris" was first played in June, 1660, one year before Molière's ill-fated

marriage with Armande Béjart. Its second representation was at a fête given by Fouquet to the Queen of England, MONSIEUR, the king's brother, and his wife, Henrietta of England. All critics are agreed in praising the powerful conception, the comic vim, and the charming style of this comedy. Molière, says Monsieur Nisard, one of his leading commentators, drew his plays from two chief sources: first, his own life, by which he touched nearly all experiences, for in himself he had a little of all natures; and secondly, his knowledge, which put him in possession of whatever had been done before him in his art. During his lifetime he was recognized as Ariste in "L'École des Maris;" Ariste, who marries, as he did, when elderly, a girl of sixteen, to whom he was ever tender and indulgent. The play was first given a year before that marriage, and a year after it he puts into the mouth of Climène in the "Fâcheux" a vigorous defence of jealousy, apologizing thus for his own tendency. He used the part of Elmire in "Tartuffe" to touch the heart of his wife by the spectacle of a woman of honor defending her virtue against seduction. To use an expression of his own time, Molière transported his domestic life

into the verities of all his plays. He not only shows us the depths of his heart, but he selects from its illusions and sufferings those which he thinks may benefit us. Boileau characterized him by a single profound epithet. He called him the Contemplator. When Molière composed his plays he contemplated, observed, and represented humanity. But, though the passion of his domestic sorrows led him sometimes to create scenes and situations in which he found a certain solace, the resemblance never degenerated into copy; and these paintings of his heart express far more the serenity of a recovered self than the bitterness of present suffering.

In the midst of the unanimous chorus of eulogy bestowed upon the "École des Maris" Geoffroy alone gives utterance to a few words of blame upon the parts which relate to the education of women. "Morality," he says, "was much relaxed at the time the piece appeared. We have only to read Fénelon on the education of girls to know what that prelate must have thought of the amusements which Molière recommends for the instruction of young women. We must therefore conclude that the latter did not have on this important

matter the necessary sternness, and that balls, fêtes, and theatres are not the best school for young people. In fact, this comedy is on the level of our present morals. Molière seems to have divined the coming change in our ideas; he prepared the way and, so to speak, he called for it in this comedy."

The *dénouement* of "L'École des Maris" is the best in all Molière's plays; it is probable, natural, evolved by the plot itself, and, better still, extremely droll. Monsieur Nisard asserts that the creation of Sganarelle in this play was the creation of the first real man in French comedy.

"Monsieur de Pourceaugnac" was written expressly for the king, on the occasion of a fête given by Louis XIV. at Chambord. Molière, it seems, did not himself attach importance to the play, although Voltaire remarks that several of the scenes are worthy to be classed as high comedy; and M. de Sainte-Beuve ranks it, as we have seen,[1] with the "Bourgeois Gentilhomme" and the "Malade Imaginaire" as bearing witness "in the highest degree to Molière's gushing, blithesome, and spontaneous merri-

[1] Vol. i. page 36.

ment." It seems a little strange that Sainte-Beuve should have classed "Monsieur de Pourceaugnac" with "Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme," to which his remark so eminently applies. No one can read the "Bourgeois" aloud, even to himself (so it seems to the translator), for the bubbling, incontinent, and pure laughter it excites. In comparison, the fun of "Monsieur de Pourceaugnac" seems rather vulgar. But Sainte-Beuve, that critic of French critics, says otherwise, and his opinion is given here. Something may be lost to the English mind of the latent drollery conveyed to the French mind by the name "Monsieur de Pourceaugnac." "Mr. de Pigpen" might translate it, but has no humor.

DEDICATION

TO MADAME[1]

MADAME, —

I AM the most embarrassed man in the world when I have to dedicate a book. I am so little fitted for the style of a dedicatory epistle that I know not how I shall be able to acquit myself of this. Another author in my place would find a hundred charming things to say to Your Royal Highness about this title — "School for Wives" — and the offering which he made of it. But as for me, Madame, I must admit my incapacity. I do not know the art of finding a connection between two subjects so little in proportion to each other, and, notwithstanding the lights my

[1] Henrietta of England, first wife of MONSIEUR (brother of Louis XIV.) and granddaughter of Henri IV. She died in 1670, aged twenty-six.

brother authors give me daily in these matters, I cannot see what Your Royal Highness can have to do with the comedy I here present to her. There is no difficulty, of course, in knowing how to praise her. That subject, Madame, is manifest to the eye. On whichever side we see her we find honor upon honor, virtues upon virtues. You have them, Madame, by rank and birth, so that all the earth respects you. You have them also in graces of the mind and body, which make you the admired of all who see you. You have them in your soul, which, if I may venture so to speak, make all who have the honor to approach you love you, — I mean the gentleness, so full of charm, by which you deign to temper the pride of your high station, the obliging kindness, the generous affability you show to all. It is particularly for these last virtues that I am grateful; and I feel that I cannot now keep silence on them. And yet, Madame, I know I have not the art to place those dazzling virtues upon this page. They are things, as I think, of too vast a meaning, too high a merit, to be compressed into a letter and mingled with trifles.

All things considered, Madame, I see nothing for me to do but to simply dedicate to you my

comedy, and to assure you, with all the respect I can possibly express, that I am, Madame,

Your Royal Highness's

Very humble, very obedient,

and very obliged servant,

MOLIÈRE.

PREFACE

MANY persons have had their fling at this comedy; but the laughers have taken its part, and all the harm that has been said of it has not prevented a success with which I am content.

I know that in this publication I am expected to write a preface which shall reply to my censors and justify my play. Without doubt, I owe enough to the persons who have given it their approbation to make me feel obliged to defend their judgment against that of others; but it so happens that the greater part of what I have to say on this subject is already expressed in a dissertation which I have written in dialogue, though as yet I do not know what I shall do with it.

The idea of this dialogue or, if some prefer to call it so, this little comedy came to me

after the second or third representation of my play.

I related the idea one evening in a house where I happened to be, and a person of quality, whose wit is well known to the world and who does me the honor to like me,[1] found the project so much to his taste that he not only urged me to take it in hand, but he put his own hand to the work; and I was much astonished two days later when he showed me the whole thing executed in a far more gallant and witty manner than I could have done it. But in it I found many things too laudatory of me; I was therefore afraid that if I produced the work at our theatre I should be accused of having begged for the praises given to me. All this prevented me, on certain considerations, from completing the work I had already begun. Still, so many persons have pressed me daily to write it that I do not yet know what will come of it; and this uncertainty is the reason why I cannot put into this preface what will be found in the "Critique," supposing I resolve to have it played.

[1] The Abbé du Buisson, who was called the "great introducer of *ruelles*," alcove reunions: see note to page 206, vol. i. The "Critique de l'École des Femmes" is in the sixth and last volume of this translated edition.

If that should happen, I say again it will be only to avenge the public for the over-nice complaints of certain censors; for myself, I think I am avenged enough by the success of my comedy. I only wish that all the others I make may be treated in the same way, if they deserve it.

L'ÉCOLE DES FEMMES

(The School for Wives)

Comedy

IN FIVE ACTS

PERSONAGES

ARNOLPHE . . . *Otherwise called M. de la Souche.*
AGNES . . . . *Innocent young girl, brought up by Arnolphe.*
HORACE . . . *Lover of Agnes.*
ALAIN . . . . *Peasant, valet to Arnolphe.*
GEORGETTE . . *Servant-woman to Arnolphe.*
CHRYSALDE . . *Friend of Arnolphe.*
ENRIQUE . . . *Brother-in-law of Arnolphe.*
ORONTE . . . *Father of Horace and great friend of Arnolphe.*

A NOTARY.

The scene is an open square of the town.

L'ÉCOLE DES FEMMES

Act First

SCENE FIRST

CHRYSALDE, ARNOLPHE

CHRYSALDE.

YOU have come back, you say, to give her your hand?

ARNOLPHE.

Yes; I intend to conclude the matter now.

CHRYSALDE.

Being quite alone, we can speak without fear. Will you let me, as a friend, lay open my heart? This project of yours makes me tremble with dread; no matter in what way you turn the affair, this taking a wife is, for you, a rash thing.

ARNOLPHE.

I shall do so, my friend. Perhaps in your case you have reason for fears you bestow upon me; your forehead, I think, is expectant of horns, — the infallible dower most marriages bring.

CHRYSALDE.

All that is a risk from which none are secure; and foolish, I think, are precautions against it. No, what I 'm fearing for *you* is the satire you turn on a hundred poor husbands who suffer its sting. There are none, great or small, as you know very well, who have ever been safe from your critical tongue. Your greatest enjoyment, wherever you are, is to make an exposure of secret intrigues.

ARNOLPHE.

So be it. But is there in all the world another town where husbands are as patient as in this? Do we not see every species of man putting up, in their homes, with all kinds of deception? One piles up wealth, which his wife is distributing to those who are busily giving him horns. Another, more happy, but none the less infamous, sees the presents that daily are made to his spouse, and no jealous thought ever enters

his mind when she tells him, forsooth, they are gifts to her virtue! A third makes a fuss which profits him nothing; a fourth, with all sweetness, lets matters go on, and when the young gallant appears at his house takes his cloak and his gloves with a cordial smile. Some wives, clever females! confide false tales of pressing lovers to their faithful lords, who sleep in peace on that illusion and pity the poor gallants for wasting a devotion which is no waste at all! Others, to justify their splendor, say that they win at cards the sums they spend; and their booby husbands, not asking at what game they played, give thanks to God for such good luck! In short, there 's everywhere such chance for satire, how can I help it if I have to laugh? If men are fools, shall I not — ?

Chrysalde.

Yes; but he who laughs at others must fear that in revenge they 'll laugh at him. I hear the talk of the world and of those who idly run about to tell the things that happen; but, often as they divulge their secrets in my presence, I never yet was known to spread such gossip. I am reserved; and though on some occasions I may condemn a husband's tolerance and, in

my own case, would not suffer what I see others bearing peaceably, I do not say so openly. We should always fear the rebound of satire; and we can never swear in any given case what we might do, or not do. So if my forehead, by fate which rules us all, should be disgraced, I may feel pretty certain that the world will be content to laugh in secret; nay, I might even have the comfort that some good folks would say it was a pity. But as for you, my friend, the case is different; and I say again, you run a devilish risk. If you would not be jeered at in your turn, you'll have to walk erect and straight among these husbands, whom for years your tongue has lashed until they think you in their hearts a devil let loose; for, if you give them but the slightest chance, beware the hue-and-cry they'll raise about you.

ARNOLPHE.

Good heavens! my friend, don't worry about that. Adroit indeed would be the man who'd catch me there. I know the artful tricks and subtle plots the women use to fool us; and as so many men are duped by their dexterity, I have taken sure precautions in my case. The

girl I marry has all the innocence I need to save my forehead from malignant influence.

CHRYSALDE.

And do you think a little fool —?

ARNOLPHE.

I wed a fool to be no fool myself. I think, as I am bound to do, your better half is virtuous, but an able woman is an ominous thing. I know the cost to some men of choosing wives with talent. What! saddle myself with a clever creature who could talk routs and *ruelle*, write prose and verse, receive the visits of choice wits and little marquises; while I, called by them all "the husband of madame," must play the part of saint whom no one worships? No, no, I do not want a mind so high; a wife who scribbles verses knows too much. Mine shall have less sublime illumination; she shall not even know what makes a rhyme, for if she plays at crambo she shall answer, when her turn comes, "Cream-tarts." In other words, I mean that she shall be extremely ignorant. It is enough for her if she can pray to God, love me, and sew and spin.

CHRYSALDE.

Well, well! a stupid woman is your hobby, is she?

ARNOLPHE.

So much so I would rather wed an ugly fool than take a handsome wife if clever.

CHRYSALDE.

Mind and beauty —

ARNOLPHE.

Virtue is enough.

CHRYSALDE.

But how do you expect a fool to know what virtue is? Besides the weariness, as I conceive, of having all one's life a fool to live with, think you that you are wise to take her, and that the safety of your honor can rest upon this theory? A woman of mind may, certainly, betray her duty; but at least she does so by deliberate choice. A stupid fool may fail in hers without desire or even thought of doing so.

ARNOLPHE.

To that fine argument and wise discourse I answer, as Pantagruel answered Panurge: Urge me to marry other than a fool, preach at me,

argue on from now till Pentecost, and when 't is done you will not have persuaded me one jot.

Chrysalde.

Then I shall say no more.

Arnolphe.

To each his own idea. About a wife, as in all else, I mean to follow mine. I am rich enough to choose a mate who will have nothing of her own but all from me; and whose submission and complete dependence will not oppose her wealth or birth to mine. Some time ago I saw with other children a child, then four years old, whose gentle quiet air inspired me with love. Her mother being in the utmost poverty, it came into my mind to ask her for her daughter; and the good peasant-woman, when she learned my wish, was glad enough to lay that burden down. In a little convent quite remote from life I have brought her up according to my policy; that is to say, I ordered that every means should be employed to make her mind as vacant as it can be. Success, thank God, has followed this design; and now, full grown, she is so simple-minded that I bless Heaven for granting what I want, — a wife who suits my wishes to a T.

I have now removed her from the convent; but as my dwelling is open to all sorts of persons all day long, I keep her in this little house apart, where no one comes to see me; and, in order not to spoil her natural goodness, I have hired servants as simple as herself. Perhaps you 'll say, "Why this narration?" It is that I may show you my precautions; and I now invite you, as my faithful friend, to sup with her to-night. I wish you to examine her a little and tell me if my choice is one to be condemned.

Chrysalde.

I readily consent.

Arnolphe.

You will be able at this interview to judge not only of her person but her innocence.

Chrysalde.

As for that latter article, what you have told me cannot —

Arnolphe.

The truth exceeds my statement. I am forced at every turn to admire her simplicity; sometimes she says a thing at which I die with laughter. The other day (if you 'll believe it), she seemed to be in trouble, and asked me, with

unequalled innocence, whether the children people made came through their ears.

CHRYSALDE.

I am truly glad, Seigneur Arnolphe —

ARNOLPHE.

There, there! why will you always call me by that name?

CHRYSALDE.

In spite of me it comes upon my lips; I can't remember Monsieur de la Souche! But what the devil induced you, in your forty-second year, to be re-christened, and give yourself a title of nobility out of that poor old rotten farm?

ARNOLPHE.

'T is the name of the house. But no matter for that, de la Souche to my ears is more pleasing than Arnolphe.

CHRYSALDE.

What folly to give up the name of your fathers and try to take one which is based upon fancy! Most people will call it a morbid caprice. I once knew (not meaning to make a comparison) a peasant known to all by the name of Fat Peter, who owning a quarter of an acre

of land dug a ditch all around it, and called himself pompously Lord of the Isle.

ARNOLPHE.

Enough of such cases. De la Souche is the name that I bear. I have my own reasons; I find it agreeable; and to call me by any other name will simply displease me.

CHRYSALDE.

Most people, I 'm thinking, will hardly conform; in fact, all your letters I still see addressed —

ARNOLPHE.

I bear it from persons not rightly informed; but from you —

CHRYSALDE.

Oh! there 's no need to squabble for that. I 'll take care to accustom my mouth to the name, and Monsieur de la Souche I will call you henceforth.

ARNOLPHE.

Adieu; I shall knock at my door just to say how d' ye do and announce my return.

CHRYSALDE, *aside, as he walks away.*

Faith! he 's crazy — crazy in every way.

ARNOLPHE, *alone.*

He is a little annoyed at being opposed. Strange, with what passion people hold their own opinions! (*Raps at the door*) Holà!

SCENE SECOND

ARNOLPHE; ALAIN; GEORGETTE, *within the house*

ALAIN.

Who is knocking?

ARNOLPHE.

Open the door. (*Aside*) There will be great joy, I think, at seeing me after my ten days' absence.

ALAIN.

Who 's there?

ARNOLPHE.

I.

ALAIN.

Georgette!

GEORGETTE.

What?

ALAIN.

Go and open the door.

GEORGETTE.

Go yourself.

ALAIN.

Go you.

GEORGETTE.

Faith, I 'll not go.

ALAIN.

And I 'll not go, either.

ARNOLPHE.

A pretty state of things, to let me wait outside! Holà! ho! let me in.

ALAIN.

Who knocks?

ARNOLPHE.

Your master.

GEORGETTE.

Alain!

ALAIN.

What?

GEORGETTE.

It is monsieur. Open the door, quick!

ALAIN.

Open it yourself.

GEORGETTE.

I am blowing the fire.

ALAIN.

My bird will get out; I 'm afraid of the cat.

ARNOLPHE.

Whichever of you two who does not open the door *first* shall have nothing to eat for four days. Ha!

GEORGETTE, *to Alain.*

What are you coming for? I 've come.

ALAIN.

Why you instead of me? a pretty trick!

GEORGETTE.

Get out of my way.

ALAIN.

No, get you out of mine.

GEORGETTE.

I must open the door.

ALAIN.

I must open it, I!

GEORGETTE.

No, you sha'n't open it.

ALAIN.

Nor you more than I.

GEORGETTE.

Nor you, I say *no*.

ARNOLPHE.

May I keep my soul in patience!

ALAIN, *appearing at the door.*

At any rate, 't was I, monsieur.

GEORGETTE.

Beg pardon, monsieur, it was I.

ALAIN.

Saving monsieur's presence, I 'll —

ARNOLPHE, *receiving a blow Alain aims at Georgette.*

The devil!

ALAIN.

Excuse me.

ARNOLPHE.

What a dolt he is!

ALAIN.

It was her fault, monsieur.

ARNOLPHE.

Hold your tongues, both of you. Answer when I speak to you, and stop this silly talk. — Tell me, Alain, is everybody well?

ALAIN.

Monsieur, we — (*Arnolphe takes the hat from Alain's head*) Monsieur, we — (*Arnolphe takes it off again*) Thank God, we —

ARNOLPHE, *taking off the hat for the third time and flinging it on the ground.*

Impertinent fool! who taught you to speak in my presence with a hat on your head?

ALAIN.

You are right; I was wrong.

ARNOLPHE, *to Alain.*

Tell Agnes to come down.

SCENE THIRD

ARNOLPHE, GEORGETTE

ARNOLPHE.

After my departure was Agnes sad?

GEORGETTE.

Sad? No.

ARNOLPHE.

No?

GEORGETTE.

Oh, yes, she was.

ARNOLPHE.

Why so?

GEORGETTE.

I remember it now. She fancied all the time she saw you coming back. Nothing went past the house, horse, mule, or donkey, but she took it for you.

—♦—

SCENE FOURTH

ARNOLPHE, AGNES, ALAIN, GEORGETTE

ARNOLPHE.

Her work in her hand — an excellent sign! Well, Agnes, you see that I've come back. Are you not glad?

AGNES.

Yes, monsieur, thank God.

ARNOLPHE.

And I am glad, too, to see you again. You have been, I suppose, quite well all the time?

AGNES.

Except for the fleas, which plague me at night.

Arnolphe.

Ah! you soon will have some one to chase them away.

Agnes.

That will be a great pleasure.

Arnolphe.

Yes; I think so too. What is that you are sewing?

Agnes.

A frill for myself. Your shirts and your nightcaps are finished already.

Arnolphe.

Ha, ha! that is well. Now return to your room. You must not feel lonely; I am coming back soon; for I 've something important to say to you, Agnes.

SCENE FIFTH

Arnolphe, *alone.*

Ah! heroines of the period! women of parts! spouters of tenderness and all fine sentiments! I defy your romances, your verses, your billets-doux, your learning, your letters, to match the worth of chaste and honest ignorance. 'T is

not the gifts of mind that ought to dazzle us; and if our honor is —

SCENE SIXTH

HORACE, ARNOLPHE

ARNOLPHE.

What do I see? Is it? Yes. No, I am mistaken. Yes, yes, 't is he himself, Horace.

HORACE.

Seigneur Arnolphe!

ARNOLPHE.

Ah! what joy! Since when are you here?

HORACE.

For the last nine days.

ARNOLPHE.

Is it possible!

HORACE.

I went to your house at once, and heard you were gone.

ARNOLPHE.

Yes, to the country.

HORACE.

For more than ten days.

ARNOLPHE.

Oh, how children grow up in a very few years! 'T is surprising to see him the height he is now when I think how I knew him no higher than that.

HORACE.

So you see.

ARNOLPHE.

But tell me — your father, my dear and good friend Oronte, whom I love and esteem, where is he, and what is he doing? Is he still gay as ever? In all that concerns him he knows I take part; though 't is more than four years since we met, and, what is more, since we have written to each other.

HORACE.

He is still, Seigneur Arnolphe, the gayest of us all, and he charged me with a letter to give to you from him. Since then he has written to tell me that he himself is coming; but the reason for this step is still unknown to me. Are you aware that one of your fellow-citizens is returning

hither with a large fortune, acquired in fourteen years spent in America.

ARNOLPHE.

No. Were you told his name?

HORACE.

Enrique.

ARNOLPHE.

I do not know him.

HORACE.

My father writes me of his return as though he ought to be well known to me. He says that they will come together, on some important business which he does not state.

(*Horace gives Arnolphe Oronte's letter.*)

ARNOLPHE.

It will be great joy to me to see your father; I shall do all that in me lies to entertain him. (*Reads the letter.*) Between such friends these compliments are useless; he might have written me nothing and yet myself and all I have would be at your disposal.

HORACE.

I am a man to take friends at their word; and I have instant need of a hundred pistoles.

ARNOLPHE.

Faith, you oblige me truly by thus using me; I am rejoiced to have them in my pocket. Keep the purse also. (*Gives him a purse.*)

HORACE.

I must —

ARNOLPHE.

No, let us drop the subject. Tell me, what think you of our town?

HORACE.

Numerous in citizens, splendid in buildings, and, as I think, marvellous in its amusements.

ARNOLPHE.

Each man takes his pleasure as he likes; but those who are dubbed with the title of gallant find much to content them, for the women of Paris are born to coquette. Dark or fair their humor is kind, and their husbands are also the mildest on earth. I find a princely pleasure in watching such affairs; the tricks I see are like a comedy played for my good. Perhaps you have already chosen your lady. Has any such good fortune come in your way? Young men who are made like you do better than win money; your face is one to entice away wives.

HORACE.

Not wishing to hide the truth, I own to a love-affair found in this vicinity; friendship compels me to tell it to you.

ARNOLPHE, *aside.*

Good! another wanton tale to put upon my tablets.

HORACE.

But, I beg of you, pray keep the thing a secret.

ARNOLPHE.

Oh!

HORACE.

On such occasions, as you know, a blurted secret often ruins hopes. — Well, I will admit, with perfect frankness, that my soul is captive to a beauty here. My first attentions met with such return that I obtained at once sweet access to her presence. And now, without boasting, or disloyalty to her, I may say that my prospects are most excellent.

ARNOLPHE, *laughing.*

And the lady is —

HORACE, *pointing to Agnes' house.*

A young girl living in that house with the red walls you see from here. A simple girl,

kept ignorant by the unheard-of error of a man who hides her from all intercourse with life; but she, amid that ignorance by which he is seeking to enslave her, shows sweet attractions capable of charm, a most engaging air, and something — I know not what — so tender that no heart could e'er withstand it. But 'it may be that you know already this young star of love, provided with so many choice attractions. Her name is Agnes.

Arnolphe, *aside.*

Ah! I shall burst!

Horace.

The man, I think, is De la Zousse, or Source, or some such name; I did not pay attention to it. Rich, so they tell me; but as for judgment, none; in fact, they talk of him as most absurd. Do you not know him?

Arnolphe, *aside.*

A sorry pill!

Horace.

You do not answer.

Arnolphe.

Well, yes, I know him.

HORACE.

Crazy, is he not?

ARNOLPHE.

Hey!

HORACE.

What say you? Hey! Does that mean yes? Jealous, is he, so that all men laugh at him? A fool? Ah! I see it is as others told me. Well, that most lovable Agnes has enslaved me. She 's a sweet treasure, and I 'd count it criminal if so rare a beauty were left in the power of that fantastic man. As for me, my efforts and my tenderest hopes are to make her mine in spite of his jealous care; and the money which I borrow with such frankness is to bring my enterprise to some safe end. You know, even better than I, that, whatever our efforts, gold is the pass-key that opens all locks. That precious metal, which affects all minds, in love as well as war, leads on to victory. But you seem grieved. Is it that you disapprove the plan I have made?

ARNOLPHE.

No, no, I was dreaming.

Horace.

This talk has wearied you. Adieu. I shall go to your house before long, to thank you, I am sure, for my success.

Arnolphe, *thinking himself alone.*

Ah! must I —

Horace, *returning.*

Once more, I beg you to be discreet. Do not, I pray you, let my secret out.

Arnolphe, *thinking himself alone.*

What feelings in my soul! —

Horace, *returning.*

Above all to my father; who might, perhaps, make it a cause for anger.

Arnolphe, *thinking Horace still there.*

Oh! —

SCENE SEVENTH

Arnolphe, *alone.*

Oh, what tortures I have suffered in this interview! No trouble of mind has ever equalled this. What imprudence, and what

headlong haste in telling this affair to me — myself! Although my name, of course, caused the mistake, did ever heedless youth show so much folly? But however much I suffered, I was forced to control myself, that I might know exactly what I had to fear. I heard to the end his thoughtless gabble to learn their secret commerce to its full extent. I 'll follow him; he cannot have gone far, I think. 'T is best to gain his confidence completely as to these facts. I tremble for the evil that may come of them; for often we seek more than we desire to find.

END OF FIRST ACT.

Act Second

SCENE FIRST

ARNOLPHE, *alone.*

WHEN I reflect upon it, 't is doubtless for the best that I have wasted my steps and missed finding his traces; the imperative trouble which fills my heart could not have been hidden wholly from his eyes; his presence must have forced out the anger that consumes me, and I do not desire he should know it as yet. — But I 'm not a man to lick up his crumbs, and leave the field open to a puppy like him! I shall break up his scheme without further delay, and learn to what point the relations between them have ventured to go. My honor is concerned in a notable way; I regard her as a wife on the terms we are now; all she does is for my sake, and to fail in her duty is to cast shame on me. Ah! fatal departure! unfortunate journey!

(*He raps at his door.*)

SCENE SECOND

ARNOLPHE, ALAIN, GEORGETTE

ALAIN.

There! monsieur, this time —

ARNOLPHE.

Silence! Here, both of you. Stand there, I say.

GEORGETTE.

Oh! you scare me; my blood 's curdling.

ARNOLPHE.

So this is the way you obey me when absent? You have laid your heads together, both of you, to betray me.

GEORGETTE, *dropping on her knees.*

Oh! monsieur, oh! don't eat me up alive, I implore you.

ALAIN, *aside.*

Some mad dog has bit him, I 'm certain of that.

ARNOLPHE, *aside.*

Ouf! I cannot speak, so angry am I. I suffocate; would I could tear my clothes off and go naked! (*To Alain and Georgette*)

You have allowed, you cursèd scum, a man to come here! (*To Alain, who tries to run away*) You want to escape me, do you? Tell me at once — (*To Georgette*) If you stir, I'll — Now, I say, you must tell me — (*To Alain and Georgette, who are both trying to escape*) The first of you that stirs, by Death! I'll strike you down. How did that man get into my house? Speak! make haste! quick! hurry! No gaping now. Tell me, I say.

Alain and Georgette.

Aie! aie!

Georgette, *falling at Arnolphe's feet.*

My heart's stopping!

Alain, *falling at Arnolphe's feet.*

I'm dying!

Arnolphe, *aside.*

I'm wringing wet — let me get breath — I must have air, and walk about — Could I have guessed, when I first knew him, that small boy! that he would grow for this? — Heavens! how my heart beats! Had I not better from his own lips, gently, draw out the truth? I'll try to moderate my anger. Patience, my heart, go softly, softly. (*To Alain and Georgette*)

Get up; go in; tell Agnes to come down. No, stop. (*Aside*) Her surprise would be less; I could not take her unawares if they should warn her; I 'll go myself and bring her down. (*To Alain and Georgette*) Wait here.

SCENE THIRD

Alain, Georgette

Georgette.

Heavens! is n't he terrible? His looks do frighten me with an awful fright; never did I see such a hideous mortal.

Alain.

That monsieur vexes him; did n't I tell you so?

Georgette.

But why the deuce does he make us keep our mistress in the house in this harsh way? Why does he want to hide her from all the world, and never let a single soul come near her?

Alain.

Because if they do it makes him jealous.

Georgette.

But what's the reason he has taken that notion?

Alain.

The reason — well, the reason is he 's jealous.

Georgette.

Yes, but *why* is he jealous? why does he get so angry?

Alain.

Because jealousy — (now you listen to what I say, Georgette) jealousy is a thing — there, you know — makes people uneasy, drives folks away from coming round the house. I 'll give you an instance, so you 'll understand the thing. Tell me, is n't it true that if you had your broth and a hungry man wanted to eat it up, you 'd get angry and drive him off?

Georgette.

Yes, I understand all that.

Alain.

Well, this is just the same thing. A woman is, you may say, a man's broth; and when a man sees other men wanting to stick their fingers in his pot, he gets angry.

GEORGETTE.

Well, if that's so why don't they all do alike? I am sure we see plenty who are very well pleased when their wives are with beaux.

ALAIN.

That's because every one is n't so greedy as to want to keep all for himself.

GEORGETTE.

Unless my eyes deceive me, I see him coming back.

ALAIN.

Your eyes are right; 't is he.

GEORGETTE.

How vexed he looks!

ALAIN.

Something has worried him.

SCENE FOURTH

ARNOLPHE, ALAIN, GEORGETTE

ARNOLPHE, *aside.*

A certain Greek told the Emperor Augustus, as a piece of useful information, that when some

incident had put him in a rage it was well to say the alphabet, in order that his bile might have time to subside and he himself do nothing he ought not to do. I practised that lesson just now upon Agnes; and I shall take her out, on pretence of a walk, to let the doubts of my sick mind approach the matter cautiously, and, by sounding her heart gently, gain the light they seek.

SCENE FIFTH

ARNOLPHE, AGNES, ALAIN, GEORGETTE

ARNOLPHE.

Come, Agnes. (*To Alain and Georgette*) Return to the house.

SCENE SIXTH

ARNOLPHE, AGNES

ARNOLPHE.

A walk is pleasant.

AGNES.

Very pleasant.

ARNOLPHE.

The day is charming.

Agnes.

Very charming.

Arnolphe.

What is the news?

Agnes.

The kitten is dead.

Arnolphe.

That's a pity; however, we are all of us mortal, and each for himself. When I was in the country, did it rain about here?

Agnes

No.

Arnolphe.

Were you dull?

Agnes

I am never dull.

Arnolphe.

What were you doing those nine or ten days?

Agnes.

Making six shirts, and six night-caps, I think.

ARNOLPHE, *after some reflection.*

The world, dear Agnes, is a very strange thing. Consider its gossip, and how people talk! Some neighbors have told me that an unknown young man has been seen, in my absence, to enter this house; and that you yourself saw him and allowed him to talk to you. But I would not put faith in their mischievous tongues, and I offered to bet that they falsely —

AGNES.

Oh! goodness, don't bet, you will certainly lose.

ARNOLPHE.

What! is it true that a man —

AGNES.

Quite true, I assure you; he scarce stirred from the house.

ARNOLPHE, *aside in a low voice.*

This confession — made with such sincerity — shows, at least, that she 's ingenuous. (*Aloud*) But, Agnes, it seems to me, if I remember right, that I forbade you to see any one.

AGNES.

Yes; but you don't know how it was I saw him. You would have done the same, no doubt, as I.

ARNOLPHE.

Perhaps. But tell me the story of how it happened.

AGNES.

It is quite surprising, and difficult to believe. I was on the balcony, sewing where it was cool, when I saw, passing under the trees near by, a very well-made young man, who, catching my eye, made me at once a very humble bow. I, not to be lacking in civility, made him a bow myself; then he made me another, which I returned at once; then he a third, and I a third as quickly. He passed along, came back, and passed again, and each time made me a new bow. I, who watched his movements fixedly, returned them all; and should have done so longer if it had not grown dark rather than let him think I was less civil than he.

ARNOLPHE.

Well?

AGNES.

The next day, being at the door, an elderly woman came to me and said — something like this: "My child, may the good God bless you, and preserve your pretty looks. He has not made you such a handsome girl that you should

make an ill use of his gifts; and you must know that you have wounded one who now is forced to make complaint."

Arnolphe, *aside.*

Ha! tool of Satan! Execrable fiend!

Agnes.

"I! wounded any one!" I said, amazed. "Yes," said she, "wounded, and wounded deeply. It is the man whom you saw yesterday beneath your balcony." "Alas!" I said, "how could I have done that? did I let something fall upon his head?" "No," she replied, "your eyes have given this fatal blow; it is their glance that did the harm." "Heavens!" I cried, "this *is* surprising. Have my eyes some evil in them which they cast on others?" "Yes," she replied, "your eyes possess a poison that you know not of, which made this wound. In short, he languishes, poor miserable man, and if," the charitable soul went on, "your cruelty refuses him relief, in a few days they 'll take him to his grave." "Good God!" I said, "how I should grieve for that! What is it I must do to better him?" "My child," she said, "all that he asks is to come here and see and talk with you.

Your eyes alone can remedy his trouble and be the medicine for the ill they 've done."

ARNOLPHE, *aside.*

Ha! you damned witch! you poisoner of souls! may hell reward your charitable plots!

AGNES.

That 's how he came to see me and was cured. Do you not think yourself that I did right? Could I have had the conscience to let him die for want of such assistance, — I who am pitiful when others suffer, and cry to see them wring the chickens' necks?

ARNOLPHE, *aside.*

All this must surely come from innocence of heart. I blame my lamentable absence, which left without a guide such ignorant goodness exposed to all the wiles of these seducers. I fear the villain with his lying vows has pushed his purpose farther than mere words.

AGNES.

What is the matter? It seems to me that you are scolding just a little. Is there any harm in what I 've told you?

Arnolphe.

No. But tell me all that followed, and how the young man paid his visits.

Agnes.

Ah! if you only knew how glad he was to come, and how his ills were cured the moment that he saw me, and the beauteous casket that he brought me, and the money that he gave to Alain and Georgette, you would love him, I know, and say with us —

Arnolphe.

Yes, yes; but tell me what he did when quite alone with you.

Agnes.

He said he loved me with incomparable love. Oh, he says the prettiest words in all the world, and things that nothing, I am sure, can equal; for every time I hear him say them I feel a gentle tingling, and something stirs within me, I don't know what.

Arnolphe, *aside.*

Ah! cruel search into a fatal mystery in which the seeker suffers all the pain. (*Aloud*) Well, besides this talk and all this prettiness, did he not make you some caresses?

AGNES.

Oh, yes, many! He took my hands and arms, and never tired of kissing them.

ARNOLPHE.

Agnes, did he take nothing else? (*Seeing her confusion*) Ouf!

AGNES.

Yes, he —

ARNOLPHE.

What?

AGNES.

Took —

ARNOLPHE.

Ha!

AGNES.

The — the —

ARNOLPHE.

Go on.

AGNES.

I dare not; you 'll be angry with me.

ARNOLPHE.

No.

AGNES.

Yes, you will.

ARNOLPHE.

Good God! no.

Agnes.

Swear it, on your faith.

Arnolphe.

By my faith, no.

Agnes.

He took — oh, but you *will* be angry?

Arnolphe.

No.

Agnes.

Yes.

Arnolphe.

No, no, no, no. The devil! what's this mystery? What did he take?

Agnes.

He —

Arnolphe, *aside.*

I suffer the tortures of the damned.

Agnes.

He took the — ribbon that you gave me; to tell the truth, I was not able to prevent it.

Arnolphe, *drawing a deep breath.*

Never mind the ribbon. But I wish to know what more he did to you than kiss your arms.

Agnes.

How? what more do people do?

Arnolphe.

Oh, nothing. But to cure the ills he said possessed him, did he ask you for no other remedy?

Agnes.

No; but if he had, you may be sure to cure him I'd have granted all.

Arnolphe, *aside.*

Thanks to heaven's mercy I am safe this time; and if I ever fall again into such danger, I give them leave to wrong me. But hush! (*Aloud*) Your innocence, Agnes, had its just effect. I shall say no more; what is done is done. I know that in thus flattering you this gallant meant to wrong you first and then to laugh at you —

Agnes.

Oh, never, not at all; he told me so a score of times.

Arnolphe.

Ah! you do not know the meaning of such pledges. But this I must teach you: to accept handsome caskets, to give ear to the nonsense

of these fine gentlemen, and to let them kiss your hands and tingle your heart, is a mortal sin, and the worst you could commit.

AGNES.

A sin, do you say? for mercy's sake, why?

ARNOLPHE.

Because it is decreed such actions anger God.

AGNES.

Anger him! But why should he be angry? it is so pleasing and so sweet a thing! I love the joy it gives me, for I knew nothing until now of what it was.

ARNOLPHE.

Yes, such tendernesses, such pretty words and soft caresses, are indeed great pleasures; but we must take them honorably; marriage removes the crime.

AGNES.

Then it is not a sin if we are married?

ARNOLPHE.

No.

AGNES.

Please marry me at once, I beg of you.

ARNOLPHE.

If you wish that, I wish it too; in fact, I have come back to marry you.

AGNES.

How glad I 'll be!

ARNOLPHE.

Yes; I have no doubt myself that marriage will please you.

AGNES.

And you wish us — both of us —

ARNOLPHE.

Assuredly I do.

AGNES.

Ah! if that happens, how I will caress you!

ARNOLPHE.

Ha! and on my part it will be reciprocal.

AGNES.

But I never know, myself, when people are joking. Are you in earnest?

ARNOLPHE.

Yes; can you not see it?

AGNES.

We shall be married?

ARNOLPHE.

Yes.

Agnes.

But when?

Arnolphe.

To-night.

Agnes, *smiling*.

To-night?

Arnolphe.

To-night — it makes you smile.

Agnes.

Yes.

Arnolphe.

To see you pleased is what I wish.

Agnes.

Ah! how grateful I shall be to you! I know that with him I shall surely be happy.

Arnolphe.

With whom?

Agnes.

With — there!

Arnolphe.

There! — *There* is not my intention. You are far too much in haste to choose a husband. 'T is another whom I have ready for you; and as for Monsieur *There*, I intend, if you please, to bury the mischief he has put in your head and stop for the future all commerce between

you. When he calls at this house to pay you a visit, you will order the door to be shut in his face; and if he still knocks you will fling, through the window, a stone to inform him he is not to return. Do you hear what I say? I shall hide in a corner and watch your behavior.

AGNES.

Oh, la, la! he 's so handsome; and —

ARNOLPHE.

What language is that!

AGNES.

I shall not have the heart —

ARNOLPHE.

No more of this fuss. Go up to your room.

AGNES.

But why? do you mean —?

ARNOLPHE.

Enough! I 'm your master; when I speak, you 'll obey.

END OF SECOND ACT.

Act Third

SCENE FIRST

Arnolphe, Agnes, Alain, Georgette

Arnolphe.

YES, all has gone right; my joy is extreme; you have followed my orders remarkably well. At all points the seducer is foiled; and you now see the use of a head to direct. Your innocence, Agnes, was being deceived. Look where you were thoughtlessly going — on the broad road to hell and eternal damnation! The morals of these fops are known to all; they wear fine breeches, ribbons, plumes; they sport long hair, white teeth, and make sweet speeches, but, as I told you, claws are underneath. They are veritable Satans, and their hungry jaws seek women's virtue for their prey. But, thanks to my command, you have escaped with honor. The air with which I saw you throw that stone which knocked his daring hopes to earth, confirms my will not to delay our wedding, for which I bid you now prepare. But, first of

all, 't is right that I should give you a little lesson as to marriage which will be salutary for you. (*To Alain and Georgette*) Bring me a seat out here. If either of you ever —

GEORGETTE.

We shall remember monsieur's lessons. That other gentleman imposed upon us; but —

ALAIN.

If he gets in again, may I never drink another drop! Besides which he 's a cheat; did n't he give us the other day two coins that were n't full weight?

ARNOLPHE.

Prepare for supper the dishes I prefer; and for the marriage-contract, as I said just now, go, one or other of you, for the notary who lodges at the corner of this square.

SCENE SECOND

ARNOLPHE, AGNES

ARNOLPHE, *seated.*

Agnes, lay down your work, and listen to me. Lift up your head, and turn your face this way. (*Putting his finger on his forehead*) There,

look at me during this interview; impress upon your mind my lightest word. I marry you, Agnes; and you ought, a hundred times a day, to bless the luck of such a destiny. Remembering the lowness of your birth, you should admire my goodness, which, from the vile condition of a village girl, has raised you to the station of an honorable bourgeoise, where you will enjoy the couch and the embraces of a man who hitherto has fled such ties — though to a score of women most capable of pleasing he has refused the honor he now bestows on you. You ought, I say, to keep before your eyes the humble place you hold without this splendid tie, in order that you may strive the more to merit the state of life to which I lift you, and, knowing what you were, act so that I be satisfied with what I do. Marriage is not a jest. The rank of wife involves stern duties; you are not, I must inform you, raised so high for libertine amusements and to take your pleasure. Your sex is here to be dependent; power is with the beard; although there are two sexes, two portions of society, those portions are not equal. One is supreme, the other is subordinate; one is, in all things, subject to the other, who governs. The soldier, trained to duty, obeys his leader, the

valet obeys his master, the child its parents, the little boy his elder brother, but the obedience of them all does not approach the docile submissiveness, the humble and profound respect a wife must show her husband, her head, her lord, her master. When he casts a serious glance upon her, her duty is to drop her eyes and not to dare to look him in the face, unless, with a soft glance, he suffers it. This is a rule the women of these days neglect; but do not you be spoiled by such examples. Abstain from imitating vile coquettes whose capers ring throughout the town. Beware lest you be taken in the snares of Satan; that is, you must not listen to any fine young spark. Remember that in making you the half of my own person, Agnes, I place my honor in your keeping. That honor is a tender thing; a very little wounds it; on such a subject there must be no foolery. Hell has a boiling caldron in which are plunged forever ill-conducted wives. What I am telling you is no mere idle tale, and you must lay to heart these lessons. If your soul follows them and shuns all coquetry, it will be, like a lily, white and pure; but if it makes one false step as to honor, it will be black as coal. You then will seem to all a hideous object; and you will some day go, the

devil's prey, to boil in hell to all eternity. God keep you from it in his heavenly mercy! Make your courtesy — Now, as a novice learns her rules by heart on entering a convent, so you on entering marriage must do likewise. Here, in my pocket, is a useful treatise which will instruct you on the duties of a wife. I do not know the author; he must be some worthy soul, and it is my wish that you shall make his words your only reading. (*Rises.*) Take it; and let me hear if you can read it properly.

Agnes, *reading aloud.*

The Maxims of Marriage
or
The Duties of a Married Woman, with a Daily Exercise therein.

First Maxim.

She who by virtuous tie
Enters a husband's bed,
Must fix it in her mind
That the man who takes her, takes her for himself.

Arnolphe.

I 'll explain to you later the meaning of that; at present you need only read the words.

AGNES, *reading.*

SECOND MAXIM.

She must adorn her person
As much, and no more,
As the man who possesses her wishes;
He alone is concerned in the care of her beauty,
And it is of no consequence
If others consider her ugly.

THIRD MAXIM.

Forbidden all study of glances,
All washes, all paints, all pomades,
And the thousand ingredients that make the skin bloom;
Such things are to virtue like poisonous drugs.
These cares for the person
To make it seem beautiful
Are taken too seldom for husbands.

FOURTH MAXIM.

When a wife walks abroad, her honor commands
That the glance of her eyes be concealed by a hood;
For to please her spouse well
She must please no one else.

FIFTH MAXIM.

Excepting those persons who visit the husband,
Good behavior forbids
The wife to receive a soul;
Those whose gallant humor
Cares only for madame
Do not suit monsieur.

Sixth Maxim.

She must refuse
All presents from men,
Because in these days
Nothing is given for nothing.

Seventh Maxim.

In her apartments, no matter if she die of dulness,
There must be neither inkstand, ink, nor pens, nor paper;
The husband should, according to good customs,
Write all that must be written in his house.

Eighth Maxim.

Those disorderly social routs,
So-called Assemblies,
Corrupt the minds of women daily;
Good policy demands they be suppressed;
'T is there conspiracies are hatched
Against poor husbands.

Ninth Maxim.

All women who to virtue vow themselves,
Must forswear cards
As fatal snares;
For gambling, most insidious,
Often leads a wife
To stake her all.

Tenth Maxim.

Excursions in fine weather,
Repasts given in the fields,

The wife must not accept;
For prudent brains declare
That husbands for these jaunts
Are those that pay.

Eleventh Maxim —

Arnolphe.

You can read the rest alone; and, step by step, as we go on, I will explain those maxims to you. I have just remembered a small matter I must attend to. Go in; and keep that little book most preciously. If the notary comes, let him wait till I return.

SCENE THIRD

Arnolphe, *alone.*

I cannot do better than make her my wife. I can turn that soul every way that I wish. She 's like wax in my hands, and will take any form it may please me to give her. How nearly inveigled she was through her innocence! But 't is better, in truth, that the woman one marries should err on that side; the cure of such error is easy enough. A creature so simple is docile to lessons, and if for a moment she wanders astray, two words will suffice to recall her.

But those women of parts are different animals! Our fate depends upon their heads, and what they once take into those no man can get out. Their wit is used to ridicule our maxims, and often to make virtues of their crimes; they find, to reach their guilty ends, all sorts of tricks that dupe the ablest men. To ward them off is wasted toil; a clever woman is a devil in wiles; and if her whims should doom our honor, we must submit and let her have her way. Many a worthy man, alas! knows that. But my young fop will have no chance to laugh; his chattering tongue has brought him his deserts. That is the common fault of Frenchmen; when they possess a love-affair, the secret always burns within them, and silly vanity has such attractions they 'd rather lose their lives than hold their tongues. Oh! how the women are tempted of the devil when they go and choose such scatter-wits as these! and — But here he is. I 'll hide my feelings well, and so discover how his defeat affects him.

SCENE FOURTH

HORACE, ARNOLPHE

HORACE.

I have just left your house; fate seems to say it has decreed that I shall never find you; but I mean to go so often that at last —

ARNOLPHE.

A truce to compliments; nothing annoys me more than ceremony, and if I had my way it should be banished; these visits are a cursèd custom on which two-thirds of people's time is wasted. Put on your hat. (*Puts on his own.*) Well, about your love-affair? May I know, Seigneur Horace, how that is coming on? When you spoke to me lately my thoughts were much distracted. Since then I have reflected. I admire the rapidity with which you proceed, and in the result my mind takes an interest.

HORACE.

Alas! since I showed you the state of my heart ill-luck has attended my love.

ARNOLPHE.

Ho, ho! how is that?

HORACE.

Cruel fortune has brought home the guardian of Agnes.

ARNOLPHE.

A misfortune, indeed!

HORACE.

Yes, and what 's more, to my bitter regret he has heard of our secret relations.

ARNOLPHE.

How the deuce did he hear it so soon?

HORACE.

I don't know; but the thing is certain. I went, at my usual hour, to pay my little visit to her sweet attractions, when, changing totally in voice and visage, the valet and the maid both barred my way. "Be off," they said, "you trouble us;" and then they rudely slammed the door.

ARNOLPHE.

They slammed the door?

HORACE.

Yes, in my face.

ARNOLPHE.

Well, that was rather strong.

HORACE.

I tried to argue through the panels, but to all I said they answered: "You can't come in; Monsieur forbids it."

ARNOLPHE.

They did not let you enter?

HORACE.

No. Then Agnes from the window confirmed the fact of his return, and, telling me in haughty tones to go away, she flung a stone to emphasize her words.

ARNOLPHE.

What! a stone?

HORACE.

A stone — and not a small one either — cast by her hand, greeted my visit.

ARNOLPHE.

The devil! stones are not plums. This is a grievous state of things.

HORACE.

True; this return is fatally unlucky.

ARNOLPHE.

I 'm sorry for you — I protest I am.

HORACE.

That man stops everything.

ARNOLPHE.

Yes, for a time; but you will find some other way to come together.

HORACE.

I shall try by some wise means to get the better of his jealous vigilance.

ARNOLPHE.

To *you* that must be easy; and the girl? you say she loves you?

HORACE.

Oh, assuredly.

ARNOLPHE.

Then you must succeed.

HORACE.

I hope to

ARNOLPHE.

But that stone that routed you? Did not that surprise you?

HORACE.

Of course it did. At first I thought the man himself was there, and, hidden from sight, was prompting what she did. But what surprised me more, as it will you, was something else,

which I will tell you, — a daring act done by my little beauty, which one could scarce expect of her simplicity. We must admit that Love is a great teacher; what we have never been, he teaches us to be; often a total change in all our being becomes, by his instruction, instantaneous. He smoothes the obstacles within our nature; and his effects seem miracles, so sudden are they. A miser is made generous, a hero a poltroon, a civil man a brute. Love makes the dullest soul alert and gives to innocence intelligence. Yes, this last miracle appeared in Agnes, for, driving me away with these harsh words, "Depart; your visits I renounce; I know the meaning of your speeches, and here 's my answer," she threw the stone, and with it was — a letter! But oh! how charmed I was to find that letter interpreting the meaning of her words and the cast missile. Are you not surprised at such an act? And does not Love know well the art of sharpening wits? Can we deny that his all-potent flame can do amazing things within the soul? What think you of this little trick? and of her note? You must admire such cleverness of mind. Is it not droll to see the part our jealous guardian plays in this bamboozlement?

ARNOLPHE.

Yes, very droll!

HORACE.

Why don't you laugh? (*Arnolphe gives a forced laugh.*) 'T is most amusing to see that man, in arms against my love, intrench himself within the house and fight with stones — as if I sought to enter by assault! — and, in his comic dread, set both his servants on me, while, before his very eyes, his machinations are being turned against him by her whom he has striven to keep a dunce. As for me, I own, though his return has brought great trouble to my love, I find it very funny, and I laugh with all my heart to think of it. But you don't laugh, my friend!

ARNOLPHE.

Excuse me, I am laughing all I can.

HORACE.

Now I must show you, as a friend, the letter. Her hand at least knows how to write all that her heart is feeling, in words most touching, full of goodness, innocent tenderness, and artless candor, — in short, the very way a

pure young nature would express its earliest sense of love.

ARNOLPHE, *aside.*

So! the minx! this is the use she makes of writing! 'T was much against my will the art was taught her.

HORACE, *reading.*

"I wish to write to you, but I am troubled how to do so. I have thoughts that I want you to know, but I do not feel able to say them; I distrust my words. As I have just begun to see how they have always kept me ignorant, I fear to write something that is not right, and to say more than I ought. To speak the truth, I do not know what you have done to injure me, but I know that I am sorry to death for what they are making me do against you; I shall suffer great pain in trying to do without you; and I should be very glad to be yours. Perhaps there is some harm in saying that, but indeed I cannot help saying it, and I hope I can do so without doing wrong. They tell me that all young men are deceivers; that I must not listen to them, and that all you have said was only said to harm me. But I do assure you I have not yet been able to think

that of you; and I am so touched by your words that I know not how to believe they are deceitful. Tell me, frankly, how that is. I am so truly without suspicion that you would do me the greatest wrong in the world if you deceived me in this. I think I should die of that distress."

Arnolphe, *aside.*

Ho! the slut.

Horace.

What is the matter?

Arnolphe.

Nothing — I coughed.

Horace.

Did you ever hear sweeter expressions? In spite of the accursed care of unjust power, how beautiful the nature she reveals. Is it not a punishable crime to try, so wickedly, to spoil that soul and smother the natural light of such a mind in ignorance and stupidity? Love is beginning, as you see, to tear away the veil; and if, by the help of some good star I can, as I hope I may, give to that vile animal, that traitor, that brute, that scoundrel, that —

ARNOLPHE.

Adieu.

HORACE.

What, so soon?

ARNOLPHE.

Yes, I have just bethought me of some pressing business.

HORACE.

But cannot you tell me, as you live so near, of some one who has access to the house? I ask it without scruple, for between friends, 't is not an unusual thing to do such service. There is no one now within the house but spies who watch me. The maid and valet, no matter how I try to soften them, won't hear a word. At first I employed a shrewd old woman, a genius in such matters, who served me well; but the poor thing died three days ago. Could you not point me to some other means?

ARNOLPHE.

No, I cannot; you 'll find them easily without me.

HORACE.

Very well, adieu; you see I trust you.

SCENE FIFTH

ARNOLPHE, *alone.*

How I was forced to curb myself before him! what pains I 've borne to hide this smarting sorrow! Can innocence be so quick-witted? Did she feign innocence to me, the traitress? or did the devil breathe upon her soul? That fatal letter has destroyed me. I see the traitor has laid hold upon her mind and now, ejecting me, is anchored there. Oh! black despair and mortal pain! This robbery of her heart is double suffering, for love repines as well as honor. I am enraged to find my place usurped, enraged to see how she has foiled my prudence. I know well that to punish her wanton love I have but to leave her to her destiny; 't is she herself who will avenge me. But it is very sorrowful to lose that which we love. Oh, Heaven! why, when I made my choice by true philosophy, why must I be so captive to her charms? She has no friends, no parents, no support; she has betrayed my care, my charity, my tenderness, and yet I love her! I love her after this base act so that I cannot live without her. Fool! are you not ashamed? Oh! I am mad, I burst

with fury, I could beat my head a thousand times against that wall. I must go in; but only for a moment, just to see if, after this black deed, she keeps her countenance. Oh, Heaven! grant that my forehead be exempt from this disgrace. Or else, if it be written above that I must bear it, grant me at least, in these events, the firmness that I see in other men.

END OF THIRD ACT.

Act Fourth

SCENE FIRST

ARNOLPHE, *alone.*

A THOUSAND cares harass my mind. I cannot, I confess, control myself enough to form a plan which shall defeat, indoors and out, the efforts of that popinjay. With what an eye the traitress bore my glance! All she has done does not abash her; though she has brought me almost to my grave, one would think, to look at her, that she knew nothing of it. The more I watch her tranquil air, the more I feel the bile within me stirred; and yet these foaming transports which convulse my heart seem only to increase my amorous ardor. I was bitter, angry, desperate against her, and yet she never looked to mine so beautiful. Never did those eyes so shine to mine, and never did I feel for her such longing. I cannot live if my sad fate it is to bear this misery. What! shall I have trained her with all care and tenderness, shall I have kept her in my home since childhood, cherishing a precious hope, building my heart

upon her budding charms, and forming her, for thirteen years, to suit me, only to see a puppy with whom she falls in love snatch her away beneath my very beard, when she is semi-married to me? No, *parbleu!* no! Young fool, my friend indeed! you shall not have the laugh on me; you may try all your tricks, but I will turn, my word upon it, all your hopes to ashes.

—•—

SCENE SECOND

A Notary, Arnolphe

Notary.

Ah! here he is. Good-day to you. I've come prepared to draw the contract you desire to make.

Arnolphe, *not seeing the notary and thinking himself alone.*

But how can it be done?

Notary.

In the usual form, of course.

Arnolphe, *thinking himself alone.*

Let me reflect on my precautions —

Notary.

I shall put nothing in against your interests.

ARNOLPHE, *thinking himself alone.*

I must protect myself against all plots —

NOTARY.

Suffice it that you place your interests in my hands; you need fear no deception.

ARNOLPHE, *thinking himself alone.*

I fear, if I suffer this matter to transpire, that the whole town will gossip —

NOTARY.

Well, 't is easy enough to hinder that by signing the contract privately.

ARNOLPHE, *thinking himself alone.*

But, in any case, how shall I treat her?

NOTARY.

The jointure is regulated by the total of your property.

ARNOLPHE, *thinking himself alone.*

I love her, and that love is my greatest hindrance.

NOTARY.

'T is easy in all contracts to favor the wife.

ARNOLPHE, *thinking himself alone.*

What treatment is best in this emergency?

NOTARY.

The rule is that the husband should endow the wife with a third of her own *dot;* but that is not enforced; more can be given if desired.

ARNOLPHE, *thinking himself alone.*

If — (*He sees the notary.*)

NOTARY.

As for the benefit of the survivor, that must be arranged conjointly; I only say that the husband can, by the marriage contract, endow the wife as he sees fit.

ARNOLPHE.

Hey?

NOTARY.

If he loves her much and wants to please her he can favor her in various ways; either by jointure or by what is called "prefix," — that is, a settlement reverting to the husband on the wife's decease; or without reversion, in which case it goes to her heirs; or by common law if both consent; or by donation in the contract which can be made either unconditional or reciprocal. Why do you shrug your shoulders? Am I talking like an ignoramus who does not know the forms of a marriage contract? Who

can teach *me*, I 'd like to know? No one, I presume. Don't I know that after marriage custom gives the parties equal rights in furniture and property, real or thereafter acquired, unless by deed they renounce them. Don't I also know that a third of the wife's *dot* becomes the common property of the husband in order to —

Arnolphe.

Yes, yes; 't is certain that you know all that; but who has said a word to you about it.

Notary.

Why, you yourself, who are trying to make me out a fool, shrugging your shoulders and grimacing at me!

Arnolphe.

A plague upon the fellow and his sluttish face! Adieu; to leave you is the only way to stop your mouth.

Notary.

Did you not send for me to draw a contract?

Arnolphe.

Yes, I did send for you; but the matter is now postponed. They 'll fetch you when the time is fixed. What a devil of a man for talk!

NOTARY, *alone.*

I think he'll stick to that — and I always think right.

SCENE THIRD

THE NOTARY, ALAIN, GEORGETTE

NOTARY *going up to them.*

Did you not fetch me by order of your master?

ALAIN.

Yes.

NOTARY.

I don't know what you think of him, but you can tell him from me that *I* say he is downright crazy.

GEORGETTE.

We won't fail to do so.

SCENE FOURTH

ARNOLPHE, ALAIN, GEORGETTE

ALAIN.

Monsieur —

ARNOLPHE.

Come here, the pair of you. You are my faithful, good, true friends; I know what you have done.

Alain.

The notary —

Arnolphe.

Never mind the notary; that's for another day. My honor is attacked by scurvy tricks; and what an injury to you, my children, if your master's honor is taken from him! You would not dare to show yourselves in any place; for even the people in the streets would point their fingers at you. Therefore, as this affair hurts you as well as me, you must keep so close a watch that this young gallant cannot, in any way —

Georgette.

You have already taught us how to do it.

Arnolphe.

Yes; but beware lest his fine speeches get the better of you.

Alain.

Pooh! they can't.

Georgette.

We shall know how to answer them.

Arnolphe.

But suppose he softly says: "Alain, kind heart, comfort my trouble with a little help."

ALAIN.

You are a fool.

ARNOLPHE.

Right. (*To Georgette*) "Georgette, my dear, you seem to me so sweet and good a girl."

GEORGETTE.

You are a booby.

ARNOLPHE.

Good. (*To Alain*) "What harm can you see in a plan so honest and all full of virtue?"

ALAIN.

You are a knave and a cheat.

ARNOLPHE.

Good, very good! (*To Georgette*) "My death is sure if you will not have pity on my pain."

GEORGETTE.

You are an impudent jackass.

ARNOLPHE.

Very good indeed! (*To Alain*) "I'm not a man to ask nothing for nothing. I remember the services every one does me; but, Alain, in advance, here's a trifle for drink; and here's

for you, Georgette, to buy a new petticoat." (*They both put out their hands and take the money.*) "That 's only a sample of what I will give you. All I ask in return is to see your young mistress."

GEORGETTE, *pushing him.*

Talk that way to others.

ARNOLPHE.

Ha! very good, that.

ALAIN, *pushing him.*

Come, get out of here.

ARNOLPHE.

Well done!

GEORGETTE, *pushing him.*

Make haste and be off!

ARNOLPHE.

Holà, that 's enough.

GEORGETTE.

Don't I do as I ought?

ALAIN.

Is n't that what you meant!

ARNOLPHE.

Yes — all but the money you ought not to have taken.

GEORGETTE.

That 's a part we forgot.

ALAIN.

Do you wish us to do it again?

ARNOLPHE.

No, once is enough. Return to the house.

ALAIN.

You have only to say so.

ARNOLPHE.

No, no; I say no! Return to the house as I tell you; I give you that money. Go in; keep an eye upon all, and second my efforts.

SCENE FIFTH

ARNOLPHE, *alone.*

I want a spy to watch the door. I 'll take that cobbler at the corner of the street, and put him in my house; he 'll keep good guard and drive away those sellers of ribbons, wigs, and handkerchiefs, perfumers, barbers, dealers in cast-off finery, who are always working underhand to help the schemes of lovers. I 've seen the world; I know its wiles; and that young spark

will be amazing clever if note or word from him enters my house.

SCENE SIXTH

Horace, Arnolphe

Horace.

How fortunate I am to meet you. I have just had a fine escape! As I passed along the street, not foreseeing this adventure, alone upon her balcony in the cool shadow of the trees, I saw Agnes. She made me a sign, and then she slipped into the garden and undid the gate. Scarcely, however, had we reached her room when she heard her jealous guardian on the stairs. All she could do, at such a pinch, was to put me in a closet. The man came in; I did not see him, but I heard him, striding up and down, fetching, from time to time, most pitiable sighs, giving great thumps upon the tables, striking a little dog that ran to him, and flinging violently round the room the clothes that lay there. He even broke, with furious hands, the vases with which my Agnes decked her mantel. No doubt some word had reached that rascally old ram about the trick she played in

dropping me the letter. At last, after a hundred twists and turns, having discharged his wrath on everything, he left the room, and I my hiding-place. But fearing his return we did not dare remain together, it was too hazardous. However, this evening, late, I am to cough three times beneath her window to let her know I 'm there, and, at the signal, I shall see her open it. Then with a ladder and the help of Agnes, my love will try to gain an entrance. As my one friend, I want to tell you this. The rapture of my heart increases if I can speak of it; though we may taste our perfect happiness a hundred times, we are not quite content if no one knows it. You will be glad, I think, at this good luck in my affairs. Adieu; for I must make my preparations.

SCENE SEVENTH

ARNOLPHE, *alone.*

So, then! the star that obstinately thwarts my hopes gives me no chance to breathe. Time after time am I to see their wits confound the prudence of my vigilant care? Am I, in my maturity, to be the dupe of a mere ignorant

girl and a young featherhead — I, who am known for twenty years to meditate with sage philosophy upon the melancholy fate of husbands? Have I not studied carefully the dangers which bring misfortune to the wisest of them? The shame of others profiting my soul, I have sought means, wishing to take a wife, to guarantee my honor from affront; a noble purpose, for which I 've put in practice the best, as I think, of all human policy; and yet, — as if fate willed that no one here below should be exempt! — after all the experience, all the light that I have gained upon this subject, after a score of years of meditation on the prudence of my conduct, am I to find myself with other husbands, in the same disgrace? Ah, cursèd destiny! how you have lied to me! But I hold possession of her still; although her heart be stolen from me by that malignant fop, at least I can prevent that he shall seize the rest. This night, selected for their daring exploit, shall not pass off as sweetly as he thinks. It is some pleasure in the midst of grief to have this warning of their plot and to find that giddy-pated fool who seeks my injury making a confidant of me, his rival!

SCENE EIGHTH

Chrysalde, Arnolphe

Chrysalde.

Well, shall we sup to-night before we take our walk?

Arnolphe.

No; I fast this evening.

Chrysalde.

What means that whim?

Arnolphe.

I beg you to excuse me; I have much upon my mind.

Chrysalde.

Will the marriage you intended not take place?

Arnolphe.

You concern yourself too much in the affairs of others.

Chrysalde.

Ho, ho! how trenchant! What's all this grief about? Tell me, old friend, has any tribulation happened to your love? I could almost swear it by the look upon your face.

Arnolphe.

Whatever happens, I shall at least have this advantage, that I can never act like certain men who tolerate calmly the approach of gallants.

Chrysalde.

'T is a strange fact that with so good a mind you make a bugbear of this matter; as if our sovereign happiness lay there, and you could not perceive in all the world another form of honor. To be a miser, brute, or cheat, wicked or cowardly, is nothing in your eyes compared to this disgrace. No matter, you think, what sort of life a man may lead, he is only a man of honor if he is not a cuckold. To go to the bottom of all this, why do you think our fame depends upon this casual chance, and that a well-born soul ought to reproach itself for unjust evils it cannot prevent? Why insist, I say, that by taking a wife a man involves himself in either praise or blame? Why make a scarecrow of the wrong her possible unfaithfulness may do him? Admit into your mind the thought that injured husbands may be gallant men; that, marriage being a game of chance, no one is safe; and, if the luck should go against

him, a man should be indifferent, and reflect that all the harm, however people gossip, is in the way he takes the thing. The wisest conduct in such difficulty is — as in all things else — to avoid extremes. Not, on the one hand, to imitate those easy-going fellows who take a sort of vanity in such affairs, praise up the gallants of their wives, extol their talents, parade the closest intimacy, share in their parties and their gifts, and so conduct themselves that other men are forced to wonder at their barefaced coolness. Such behavior is most blamable. But on the other hand, the opposite extreme is much to be condemned. Although I disapprove these friends of lovers, I 'm not in favor of those turbulent folk whose growling and tempestuous grief imprudently attracts the eyes of all the world; and who, by such exposure, seem to wish that no one should be ignorant of their misfortune. Between these two extremes there is a better way, which, if the need occurs, a wise man should adopt; and when he takes it, he will find he does not have to blush for the worst actions that a wife can do. No matter what the world may say, husbands might easily regard this matter under less hideous aspects, and, as I said before, true

wisdom lies in knowing how to turn the best side out.

Arnolphe.

After this fine discourse, the whole fraternity of luckless husbands owes to your Grace a vote of thanks; whoever listens to your words must surely wish to join that joyful band.

Chrysalde.

I don't say that; for that is what I blame. But, as it is the fate which women bring us, I say we ought to take it as we throw the dice; if what we want does not turn up, we should play low, and with a humbler soul correct ill-fortune by our own good conduct.

Arnolphe.

That is to say, eat and sleep well, and so persuade ourselves that nothing is amiss.

Chrysalde.

You think you are making game of me. But let me tell you that I see a hundred things more to be dreaded, things that would be to me a greater misery, than this you fear. Think you that if I had to choose between the two, I would not rather bear the thing you speak of than be the husband of a shrew, whose

nagging temper makes a fuss for naught; one of those dragons of virtue, spotless devils, who think they have the right to lord it over us and, on the ground of their fidelity, expect us to put up with all they do. Once more, old friend, I tell you truly, the fate you dread is only what you make it; and this disaster, like all other things, may have its pleasures and its compensations.

Arnolphe.

If you 've a temper that can thus content itself, so be it; as for me, I do not choose to risk that fate, and sooner than submit to such disgrace I swear —

Chrysalde.

Oh, heavens!, don't swear, for fear of being perjured; if destiny decrees it, caution is superfluous; your counsel won't be taken in the matter.

Arnolphe.

Well, enough of all this jesting; it annoys me; we 'll stop it, if you please.

Chrysalde.

You are angry; and I shall find out the cause. Adieu. Remember, although your honor

prompts you in all this, he who makes oath he will not be the thing you fear is partly that already.

Arnolphe.

Again I swear it; and I am going now to practise a sure remedy against it. (*He raps at his door.*)

SCENE NINTH

Arnolphe, Alain, Georgette

Arnolphe.

Friends, I want your help. I am proud of your affection, but it must now shine forth in my defence; and if you serve me, as I think you will, you may be certain of your recompense. The man you know of (say no word of this) intends, as I have heard, to take us by surprise this very night, and enter Agnes' window by a ladder. We must, all three of us, prepare an ambush. I wish you each to take a stick and when he 's near the top rung of the ladder, rain blows for my sake on him in such a way his back shall keep the memory of this night and teach him, once for all, he never can return. Be careful not to speak of

me in any way, or let him know that I am close behind you. Shall you have sense enough to serve my anger?

ALAIN.

If all that 's needed is to strike, my goodness! we 'll do that. When I strike, as you shall see, my hand ain't dead.

GEORGETTE.

And mine, though it may look less strong, can hold its own in giving him a drubbing.

ARNOLPHE.

Well, now go in; be careful not to gossip. (*Alone*) Now I can give a useful lesson to my neighbors. If all the husbands in this town received the gallants of their wives in this way the number of those cuckolds would diminish.

END OF FOURTH ACT.

Act Fifth

SCENE FIRST

Arnolphe, Alain, Georgette

Arnolphe.

WRETCHES, what have you done by all this violence?

Alain.

Just what you told us, monsieur.

Arnolphe.

In vain you arm yourself with that excuse. My order was to beat him, not to kill him; to strike his back, but not rain blows upon his head. Good heavens! in what disaster fate involves me! how can I bear to look on that dead man! Go in at once, and say no word about the harmless order that I gave you. (*Alone*) The day is dawning; let me reflect how I had best conduct myself in such a dire mishap. Alas! what will become of me? what will the father say when he arrives and hears, on a sudden, of this sad affair.

SCENE SECOND

HORACE, ARNOLPHE

HORACE, *aside.*

I ought to reconnoitre who this is.

ARNOLPHE, *thinking himself alone.*

How could I have foreseen — (*Stumbles against Horace, whom he does not recognize.*) Who 's there, if you please?

HORACE.

What, Seigneur Arnolphe, is this you?

ARNOLPHE.

Yes, but who are you?

HORACE.

I 'm Horace, and I was going to your house to ask a favor. How early you are out!

ARNOLPHE, *aside.*

'T is inconceivable! Is it enchantment? Is it illusion?

HORACE.

I am, to tell the truth, in some anxiety, and I bless heaven for its sovereign kindness in allowing me to meet you here. I must tell you that my scheme succeeded even better than I

dared to hope, and through an incident, moreover, which threatened to defeat it. I don't know how this assignation could have been suspected, but, at any rate, just as I reached the window several persons rushed upon me suddenly, so that I lost my balance and fell headlong from the ladder. But this fall saved me, at the cost of trifling bruises, from a score of blows; while those above (among them, I think, my enemy) believed the fall resulted from their blows, and, as the pain I felt kept me still lying on the ground, they thought they had killed me outright, and were much alarmed. I heard their talk amid the silence; each accused the other, and, in the darkness, quarrelling still, they all crept down to feel of me and see if I were dead. I leave you to imagine whether, it being pitch dark, I did not play the corpse. They soon departed, frightened, I think, to death, and I was just about to go myself when Agnes, who had heard these people talking of my death, came to me, trembling; for during this tumult, being less observed, she had been able easily to leave the house. Finding I was not really hurt, she yielded to a transport I cannot describe. How shall I tell you? This sweet young girl followed the counsels of her love; she would

not enter that man's house again, and to my honor she commits her destiny. Think for a moment to what such innocence exposed her, and what grievous perils she might have run were I a man to treasure her less! But my soul is glowing with a love too pure; I 'd rather die than wrong her. In all she does I see a grace that is deserving of a higher fate; and nothing now can part me from her until death. 'T is true that I foresee my father's anger, but we must hope in time to appease his wrath. I yield myself to her sweet charms and know the value of content in life. What I have come to ask of you is this: that I may place my Agnes in your hands, and that your house may be her shelter for a day or two. Besides the fact that I must hide her flight and guard her from pursuit, you know that if a girl joins a young man in this way it will give rise to strange suspicions. And since to you, sure of your prudence, I have told my love, to you I now, as to a generous friend, confide this precious trust.

Arnolphe.

I am, I pray do not doubt it, wholly at your service.

Horace.

Then you will really do me this kind office?

ARNOLPHE.

Most willingly, I tell you. I am delighted with this chance to serve you, and I thank heaven that sends it to me; never have I done anything with so much joy.

HORACE.

How grateful I am for all your kindness! I feared that you might make some difficulties. But you know life, and, in your wisdom, you can excuse the fire of youth. Agnes is here, close by; one of my servants guards her.

ARNOLPHE.

Ah! how shall we manage it? 'T is nearly daylight, and if I take her here I may be seen; yet if you come to me my servants might report it. The safest way would be to bring her to some dark place and give her to me there. The alley near my house is just the thing; I will await you there.

HORACE.

Those are precautions you do well to take. As for me, I 'll simply put her hand in yours and then return at once to my own house.

ARNOLPHE, *alone.*

Ah, fortune! this propitious end repairs the wrongs your whims have done me.

SCENE THIRD

Agnes, Arnolphe, Horace

Horace, *to Agnes.*

Do not be troubled as to where I 'm taking you; it is a safe retreat. To lodge you in my house would be to injure you. Enter this little gate, and let the person who will meet us lead you. (*Arnolphe takes Agnes' hand without her recognizing him.*)

Agnes, *to Horace.*

Why do you leave me?

Horace.

Dear Agnes, because I must.

Agnes.

But come back soon, I beg you.

Horace.

My loving ardor urges it.

Agnes.

When I do not see you I am not content.

Horace.

Away from you I, too, am sad.

Agnes.

Alas! if that were so you 'd stay with me.

HORACE.

What! can you doubt my faithful love?

AGNES.

No! you do not love me as I love you. (*Arnolphe pulls her.*) Ah! he pulls me from you.

HORACE.

Because, dear Agnes, it is dangerous for you if we are seen together. My faithful friend whose hand holds yours obeys the prudent zeal he feels for us.

AGNES.

But, to follow a stranger who —

HORACE.

Fear nothing; in his hands you cannot but be safe.

AGNES.

I'd rather be in those of Horace. (*To Arnolphe, who pulls her again*) Ah! wait.

HORACE.

Adieu; the daylight drives me from you.

AGNES.

When shall I see you?

HORACE.

Soon, soon, assuredly.

AGNES.

How I shall weary for that moment!

HORACE, *as he goes away.*

Thanks be to heaven, my happiness no longer fears a rival and I can sleep in peace.

SCENE FOURTH

ARNOLPHE, AGNES

ARNOLPHE, *concealed by his cloak and disguising his voice.*

Come; it is not here that I shall lodge you. Your room has been prepared by me elsewhere. Come, I shall put your person now in some safe place. (*Dropping his cloak.*) Do you know me now?

AGNES.

Aie!

ARNOLPHE.

My face, deceitful girl, may well alarm you; it vexes you to see me here; I thwart the scheming love that now possesses you. (*Agnes looks about, trying to see Horace.*) You need not call your gallant with your eyes; he is too far off to give you any help. Ah! ah! so

young, and yet to play such tricks! Your artlessness, which seemed unparalleled — asking if children were not born through ears! — knows how to give a rendezvous by night and follow a lover slyly. *Tudieu!* I heard your tongue cajole him! He must have put you through a pretty schooling! But how the devil did you learn so fast? or did your gallant in a single night teach you this boldness? Ha, hussy! that *you* should come to this vile treachery! in spite of all my benefits, that *you* should form a scheme like this! Young serpent that I warmed within my bosom, who now, no longer numb, with base ingratitude seeks to do ill to him who cherished it!

Agnes.

Why do you scold me thus?

Arnolphe.

Ha! a great wrong I do you!

Agnes.

I see no harm in what I do.

Arnolphe.

To follow a lover is most infamous.

AGNES.

He is a man who wants me for his wife. I have followed your lessons; you told me we should marry to avoid all sin.

ARNOLPHE.

Yes, but I meant to take you for my wife; I think I made you understand that plainly.

AGNES.

Yes, but to speak quite frankly, he is for that more to my taste than you. With you, marriage is cross and peevish, and all you say of it draws such a dreadful picture; but there! when he describes it, 't is so full of pleasures he makes one wish to marry.

ARNOLPHE.

Ha! you love him, treacherous girl!

AGNES.

Yes, I love him.

ARNOLPHE.

And you have the face to say it in my presence!

AGNES.

Why, if it be true, should I not say it?

ARNOLPHE.

Ought you to love him, jade?

AGNES.

Ah! how can I help it? he is alone the cause. I never thought of it till the thing happened.

ARNOLPHE.

You should have driven that amorous wish away.

AGNES.

How can one drive away that which gives pleasure?

ARNOLPHE.

Did you not know you were displeasing me?

AGNES.

I? no, indeed. What harm could that do you?

ARNOLPHE.

True, I have reason to rejoice! oh, yes! So then, you do not love me, it appears.

AGNES.

You?

ARNOLPHE.

Yes.

AGNES.

No.

ARNOLPHE.

What! you say no?

AGNES.

No. Would you have me lie?

ARNOLPHE.

And why, rebellious girl! do you not love me?

AGNES.

It is not I you ought to blame. Why did not you, as he did, make yourself loved? I never, that I know of, hindered you.

ARNOLPHE.

I strove with all my might to do so, but the pains I took have come to naught!

AGNES.

Well, truly, he knows more of this than you; he did not find it hard to make me love him.

ARNOLPHE, *aside.*

A plague upon her! how this wretched girl reasons and answers; no *précieuse* could say more. Ha! I have misconceived her; or else, by heaven! a silly girl knows more of these things than the ablest man. (*To Agnes*) As your mind, it seems, has taken to reasoning, perhaps you can tell me whether 't is likely I should have nourished you these many years, at my expense, for him?

Agnes.

No; and he will pay you back to the last farthing.

Arnolphe, *aside.*

Such speeches only double my vexation! (*Aloud*) Can he return, you hussy, with all his power, the obligations that you owe me?

Agnes.

They are not so great as one would think.

Arnolphe.

The care with which I brought you up from childhood, — it that nothing?

Agnes.

Truly, how has that worked for me? What have you had me taught? Do you think I am deceived and in my mind I do not know that I am stupid? I am ashamed of it myself, and now that I am growing older I do not want to be a fool if I can help it.

Arnolphe.

You want, at any rate, to escape your ignorance by learning something from that fair-haired dandy.

AGNES.

Yes; for it is through him I now know what I could know. I think I owe to him far more than I owe to you.

ARNOLPHE.

I don't know what prevents me from avenging this bravado with a slap; your saucy coolness is infuriating, and it would satisfy my heart to box your ears.

AGNES.

Alas! you can do so, if you wish.

ARNOLPHE, *aside.*

That answer and that look disarm me, and turn my heart again to tenderness. What a strange thing is love, that for these treacherous creatures men must be ever subject to such weakness! Who does not know their imperfections, made up of folly and extravagance? Their minds are wicked and their souls are frail; nothing on earth can be more feeble, imbecile, and faithless! And yet, in spite of that, all that we do in this world is for these animals. (*To Agnes*) Well, Agnes, let us make it up. There, little traitress, I 'll forgive you and grant you again my tenderness. Judge from that how

much I love you; and seeing me so kind, you must in turn love me.

Agnes.

With all my heart I wish that I could please you; if it were possible, I 'm sure I would.

Arnolphe.

Poor little heart! but you can love me if you will. Listen only to my tender sighs, look at my person, see my longing glances, and quit that silly fool, reject the sort of love he offers you. He has cast a spell upon you. You will be happier far with me. Your natural passion is to be smart and lively, and that you shall be, always — hear me! I promise it. Night and day I will caress you, pet you, kiss you; you shall do always as you wish in all things — (*Aside in a low voice*) Where will not passion lead us? (*Aloud*) In short, my love can not be equalled. What proof can you desire, ungrateful girl? Would you have me weep? Would you see me smite myself? Shall I tear out my hair? expire at your feet? Speak! say what you wish, for I am ready, oh, cruel heart! to prove my love.

AGNES.

But such talk does not touch my soul; Horace with two words can say more than you.

ARNOLPHE.

Ha! this is braving me too much! you 've dared my wrath too far. Unmanageable fool! I 'll follow my first intent and send you from this town. You may reject my love and drive me to extremes, but a convent cell will amply punish all.

SCENE FIFTH

ARNOLPHE, AGNES, ALAIN

ALAIN.

Monsieur, I don't know how it happened, but it seems to me that Agnes and the corpse have gone away together.

ARNOLPHE.

Agnes is here. Take her, and lock her in my chamber. (*Aside*) He will not seek her there; besides, 't will only be for half an hour; I 'll get a coach at once and take her to a safe retreat. (*To Alain*) Lock the door securely and do not let her, for one moment, out of your

sight. (*Alone*) Perhaps her soul, if kept in solitude in some strange place, may yet be driven from this fatal love.

SCENE SIXTH

ARNOLPHE, HORACE

HORACE.

Ah! I seek you, overcome with grief. Heaven, Seigneur Arnolphe, is resolved upon my misery; and by a fatal act of deep injustice tears from my arms the woman whom I love. My father came last night; I found him stopping in a house near by; and the reason of his coming, which, as I told you, was unknown to me, is that he plans my marriage, without a word to me, and comes here now to celebrate the tie. Imagine, you who have taken part in my anxieties, if any mischance could be as bad as this. Enrique, of whom I spoke to you, is the cause of it. He comes here with my father to complete my ruin; it is his only daughter to whom they marry me. At their first words I nearly fainted; then, unable to listen longer, and hearing my father speak of paying you a visit, I, with a mind distressed,

have rushed here quickly to forestall him. For pity's sake, do not betray my love, which might incense him; and — because he has such confidence in you — try to dissuade him from this other marriage.

ARNOLPHE.

Ho, yes, indeed!

HORACE.

Advise him to postpone the thing awhile. Do, as a friend, this service to my love.

ARNOLPHE.

Ha! I 'll not fail to do it.

HORACE.

My hope is all in you.

ARNOLPHE.

So be it.

HORACE.

I regard you as my true father. Tell him that my age — Ah! I see him coming. Step here with me, and listen to my reasons.

SCENE SEVENTH

Enrique, Oronte, Chrysalde, Horace, Arnolphe

Horace and Arnolphe retire to a corner and confer together.

Enrique, *to Chrysalde.*

The moment that I saw you enter, though nothing had been said to me, I knew you at once. I see in you the features of your lovely sister, of whom in marriage I was once possessed. Happy indeed, should I be now if cruel fate had let me bring my faithful partner back, to enjoy with me the pleasure of seeing our friends once more after our many sorrows. But, since the fatal power of destiny deprives us ever of her dear presence, let us endeavor to resign ourselves, and be content with the one pledge of love she left to me. This visit concerns you closely; I should do wrong to pledge my daughter's hand without consulting you. A marriage with Oronte's son is glorious in itself, but it must be your choice as well as mine.

Chrysalde.

You have a poor opinion of my judgment if you doubt that I approve so wise a choice.

ARNOLPHE, *aside to Horace.*

Yes, I will serve you in the finest fashion.

HORACE.

Pray be careful —

ARNOLPHE.

Have no fear. (*Arnolphe leaves Horace and comes forward to greet Oronte.*)

ORONTE, *to Arnolphe.*

Oh! how full of tenderness this greeting is!

ARNOLPHE.

I feel, at the mere sight of you, the deepest joy.

ORONTE.

I have come here to —

ARNOLPHE.

I know already why you come.

ORONTE.

Has some one told you?

ARNOLPHE.

Yes.

ORONTE.

So much the better.

ARNOLPHE.

Your son resists this marriage; his heart, engaged elsewhere, sees only sadness in the prospect. He has even urged me to dissuade you from it. But as for that, the only counsel I shall give you is not to allow the least delay, and to enforce the authority of father. We ought to keep young men in place with vigor; we injure them by being too indulgent.

HORACE, *aside.*

Oh, traitor!

CHRYSALDE.

But if his heart feels some repugnance I do not think we ought to force it. My brother, I believe, will be of my opinion.

ARNOLPHE.

What! would he let himself be governed by his son? Do you wish a father to be so timid as not to know how to make a son obey him? A fine thing truly it would be if fathers took the law from those whose duty 't is to take the law from them. No, Oronte is my friend and his honor is mine; his word is given, and he must keep it. Let him show firmness now and force his son to yield obedience.

ORONTE.

Yes, you say well. As for this marriage, I will myself be answerable for my son's obedience.

CHRYSALDE, *to Arnolphe.*

I am surprised, for my part, at the eagerness you show about this new engagement. I can't imagine what motive you can have.

ARNOLPHE.

I know what I am doing, and I say what I ought to say.

ORONTE.

Yes, yes, Seigneur Arnolphe, it is —

CHRYSALDE.

That name annoys him; call him, as I told you, Monsieur de la Souche.

ARNOLPHE.

No matter for the name.

HORACE, *aside.*

What do I hear?

ARNOLPHE, *going up to Horace.*

Yes, there 's the whole mystery. You can judge now what I think right to do.

SCENE EIGHTH

Enrique, Oronte, Chrysalde, Horace, Arnolphe, Georgette

Georgette.

Monsieur, if you don't come soon we can't keep Agnes in. She is trying to escape in every way; she may be jumping through the window now.

Arnolphe.

Bring her to me. I am about to take her from this town. (*To Horace*) You need not feel distressed. Continual happiness makes men proud; to every man his turn, the proverb says.

Horace, *aside.*

Oh, heaven! what woes can equal mine! and what a gulf is this before me!

Arnolphe *to Oronte.*

Hasten the wedding-day; I shall be back in time to take a part. You see I give myself an invitation.

Oronte.

It was my intention to invite you.

SCENE NINTH

Agnes, Oronte, Enrique, Arnolphe, Horace, Chrysalde, Alain, Georgette

Arnolphe *to Agnes.*

Come here, fair damsel, come, you whom they can't restrain, you are so headstrong. Here is your lover, and, to reward him, make him a sweet and humble curtsey. (*To Horace*) Adieu; events are not exactly what you wished, but every lover can't be satisfied.

Agnes.

Will you let me, Horace, be taken from you thus?

Horace.

I know not where I am, my anguish is so great.

Arnolphe, *pulling Agnes.*

Come, chatterer, come.

Agnes.

I wish to stay.

Oronte.

Tell us what all this mystery means. We are looking on, but cannot comprehend it.

Arnolphe.

Later, when I have leisure, I'll explain. Till then, adieu.

ORONTE.

Where are you going? You are not speaking to us as you ought to speak.

ARNOLPHE.

I have advised you, much against his will, to conclude the marriage of your son.

ORONTE.

Yes, but in order to conclude it, you surely know — if, as you say, they have told you all — that in your house you have the girl he is to marry, — the daughter whom Seigneur Enrique by a private marriage had of the charming Angélique. If you did not know this fact, on what was the advice you gave me founded?

CHRYSALDE.

I thought his whole behavior most surprising.

ARNOLPHE.

What!

CHRYSALDE.

My sister by her secret marriage had a daughter, whose birth was hidden from the family —

ORONTE.

A child, who under a feigned name was given by its father to a village foster-mother —

CHRYSALDE.

Soon after which an adverse fate, bringing disaster on him, caused him to leave his native country —

ORONTE.

And face a thousand perils in lands beyond the seas —

CHRYSALDE.

Where his behavior won him the success that envy and detraction had denied him here —

ORONTE.

On his return to France he sought at once the village-wife with whom he had left his daughter —

CHRYSALDE.

And she, the peasant-woman, frankly told him that she had placed her in your hands when four years old —

ORONTE.

Leaving her thus upon your charity because of her own excessive poverty —

CHRYSALDE.

And he, with joy and eagerness of soul, has brought that woman to this town —

ORONTE.

That you may see her. She comes to clear this mystery to the eyes of all.

CHRYSALDE, *aside to Arnolphe.*

I can divine the torture you endure. But, after all, fate is, in this mischance, propitious to you; fearing so much the common fate of men, not to be married is your only safety.

ARNOLPHE, *departing furious, and unable to speak.*

Ouf!

SCENE TENTH

ENRIQUE, ORONTE, CHRYSALDE, AGNES, HORACE

ORONTE.

Why does he rush away without a word?

HORACE.

Ah, father! you must now be told in full this most surprising mystery. Chance had already brought about that which your wisdom has premeditated. I, in the gentle bonds of mutual love, had passed my word to marry this sweet girl. 'T is she whom you have come to seek; she, whom I angered you by first refusing.

ENRIQUE.

I cannot doubt it; from the moment that I saw her my soul has never ceased to be affected. Ah! my daughter, I yield me to the transports of this joy.

CHRYSALDE.

And I, with all my heart, will do the same. But this is not the place for such emotions. Let us within the house clear up these mysteries, repay our friend the cost of his good care, and render thanks to heaven — which does all for the best!

END OF L'ÉCOLE DES FEMMES.

L'ÉCOLE DES MARIS

(The School for Husbands)

Comedy

IN THREE ACTS

DEDICATION

To MONSEIGNEUR,

THE DUC D'ORLÉANS, ONLY BROTHER OF THE KING.

MONSEIGNEUR,—

I SHOW to France in this publication two things that are little in proportion to each other. There is nothing so great and so superb as the name I put at the head of this book, and nothing lower than what the book contains. Every one can see that strange conjunction; and some may well say, to express the contrast, that I have placed a crown of pearls and diamonds on a clay statue, and have led the way through a splendid portico and triumphal arches to a squalid cabin. But, Monseigneur, my excuse is that in this venture I have no choice, and that the honor of belonging to Your Royal Highness[1] imposes

[1] Molière was the leader of MONSIEUR'S troupe of actors. MONSIEUR was the name given, after the reign of Louis XIII., to the eldest of the king's brothers.

upon me the absolute necessity of dedicating to you the first work which, of my own will, I have ever published. It is not a gift I make to you, it is a duty which I perform; and homage is never estimated by the things that convey it.

I have therefore dared, Monseigneur, to dedicate this trifle to Your Royal Highness, because I could not dispense with so doing; and if I dispense with a recital of the noble and glorious truths that might be said about you it is from a just apprehension that the grandeur of such topics would exhibit still further the poorness of my offering. I impose this silence upon myself in order to find a better time and place to express such noble things. All that I pretend to do in this epistle is to justify my action in the eyes of France, and to have the honor of telling to you yourself, Monseigneur, with all possible submission, that I am

Your Royal Highness's
very humble, very obedient, and
very faithful servant,
J. B. P. Molière.

PERSONAGES

SGANARELLE, ARISTE	*Brothers.*
ISABELLE, LÉONOR	*Sisters.*
LISETTE	*Maid to Léonor.*
VALÈRE	*Lover of Isabelle.*
ERGASTE	*Valet to Valère.*
A COMMISSARY.	
A NOTARY.	

The scene is in Paris.

L'ÉCOLE DES MARIS

Act First

SCENE FIRST

SGANARELLE, ARISTE

SGANARELLE.

BROTHER, if you please, let us cease these discussions, and each of us live as we each may think best. Although you have much the advantage in years and are old enough now to have learned to be wise, I must honestly tell you it is my intention not to take any more of your proffered advice. The counsel I follow is that of my fancy, and I 'm very content with my manner of life.

ARISTE.

But others condemn it.

SGANARELLE.

Yes, fools like yourself.

Ariste.

Brother, a thousand thanks; the compliment is kind.

Sganarelle.

I would like much to know — for one ought to know all — what these fine censors find to reprehend.

Ariste.

Your sullen temper, the severity of which eschews the amenities of social life, gives a fantastic air to all you do, and, even to your clothes, stamps you as barbarous.

Sganarelle.

Truly, I ought to bow my neck to fashion's yoke! It is not for myself that I should clothe me! Can't you, my good elder brother, — for, God be thanked, you are that (not to curtail you) by a score of years, — can't you, I say, in these respects, teach me the manners of your silly fops, force me to wear those little hats that flatten their weak brains, and those blond periwigs, of which the vast expansion hides the face, those scanty doublets ending at the armpits, and those huge collars reaching to the waist, those sleeves that dip into the gravies, those petticoats called breeches, those dainty shoes tricked out with ribbons that make you

look like spur-heeled pigeons, and those enormous ruffles at the knees, in which, like fetters, you daily put your legs, compelling you to walk in straddles? Oh, yes! 't would please you much, no doubt, to see me rigged in just the silly things I see you wear.

Ariste.

Well, we should all adopt the ways and customs of the greater number, and never make ourselves conspicuous. Extremes offend; and wise men ought to do with clothes as they do with language — affect no mode, and yet, without pretension, follow the changes custom brings about. My feeling is, never to take the style of those we see exaggerating fashion, fools who would be distressed if others went beyond them in those extremes of which they are so fond. But I also think 't is wrong, no matter on what ground you base it, to stubbornly reject the customs of the world; and, of the two, we 'd better join the company of fools than find ourselves alone, against them all, with wisdom.

Sganarelle.

Ha! how that savors of the aged man who, to impose upon us, hides his white hairs beneath a jet-black wig.

ARISTE.

'T is a strange fact the pains you take to cast my age forever in my teeth! Why will you blame my apparel and my pleasures, as if old age, condemned to enjoy no more, should think of death alone, and were not hideous enough already without the further horror of being uncleanly and grim-visaged.

SGANARELLE.

However that may be, I am attached too firmly to my style of dress to give it up. I choose, in spite of fashion, to wear a hat that shelters my whole head, a doublet long enough to cover me and closed up as it should be, one that shall keep my stomach warm for digestion, breeches that fit my thighs, shoes in which my feet shall not be tortured, such as our fathers wisely wore; and he who does not like to see me so can shut his eyes.

SCENE SECOND

LÉONOR, ISABELLE, LISETTE; ARISTE, and SGANARELLE, *in front of stage, and not seen by the others*

LÉONOR, *to Isabelle.*

I 'll take it all upon myself, in case he scolds you.

Lisette *to Isabelle.*

Kept always in the house and seeing no one!

Isabelle.

That 's his way.

Léonor.

I pity you, my sister.

Lisette, *to Léonor.*

Lucky for you his brother's nature is of another sort. Fate has been kind to let *you* fall into more reasonable hands.

Isabelle.

The wonder is he did not lock me up to-day, or take me with him.

Lisette.

Faith! I 'd send him to the devil, he and his ruff, and —

Sganarelle, *jostled by Lisette.*

Where are you going, if I may ask?

Léonor.

We don't know yet; I urged my sister to come out with us, to enjoy this lovely weather.

Sganarelle, *to Léonor.*

As for you, you can go where you like; (*pointing to Lisette*) you can gad everywhere,

the pair of you; but you (*to Isabelle*), I have forbidden you to leave the house.

ARISTE.

Hey! brother, let them amuse themselves.

SGANARELLE.

Thanks for your advice!

ARISTE.

Youth needs —

SGANARELLE.

Youth is foolish, and so, too often, is old age.

ARISTE.

What harm can come to her with Léonor?

SGANARELLE.

None, perhaps; but she is better off with me.

ARISTE.

But —

SGANARELLE.

Her actions should depend on me; I know the care I ought to take of them.

ARISTE.

Have I less interest in her sister's conduct?

SGANARELLE.

Oh, heavens! let us each act and reason as we please. These sisters have no parents; our friend their father, on his dying bed, committed them to you and me, charging us to marry them or, if we refused, to dispose of them to others; giving us, meanwhile, the power of father and husband over them. You took the charge of Léonor, I of Isabelle; you govern yours as you think best; leave me, I beg of you, to rule the other as I choose.

ARISTE.

It seems to me —

SGANARELLE.

It seems to *me*, and I proclaim it, that on this point 't is best to be explicit. You let your ward be gay and dress her daintily; well, so be it! She has a maid and lacquey; I consent. She gads about, loves laziness, and is at liberty to dally with the sparks; I say no word against it. But I intend that mine shall live in my way, not in hers; her clothes shall be of honest serge; she shall wear black except on holy-days; shut up at home she must, like every virtuous woman, attend to household matters; in her spare moments mend my linen or knit my socks;

she must, moreover, close her ears to the talk of dandies and never leave the house except with some one to keep watch upon her. Flesh is weak; I know its dangers; and I do not intend to wear the horns if I can help it; her luck appoints that she shall marry me; therefore I 'm bound to answer for her, body and soul.

ISABELLE.

You have no reason, as I think, to —

SGANARELLE.

Hold your tongue; I 'll teach you to go out without me.

LÉONOR.

But, monsieur —

SGANARELLE.

Madame, 't is not to you I 'm speaking; you are too virtuous!

LÉONOR.

Do you object that she should be with me?

SGANARELLE.

Yes, I do; you injure her for me. I see I must speak plain; your visits here displease me, and you 'll oblige me if you pay no more.

Léonor.

Will you allow my heart to speak as plainly? I do not know how she may view all this, but I know what *my* feelings are, and we should scarce be sisters of one blood if your behavior to her day by day could make her love you.

Lisette.

In fact, the care you talk of is a shameful thing. Are we among the Turks who lock their women up? — for I have heard it said their wives are slaves, and that 's the reason Turks are cursed of God. Our honor, monsieur, must be weak indeed to need such ceaseless watching. Think you that such precautions, after all, will be a hindrance to our bad intentions? And if we take a fancy in our heads do you suppose the cleverest man among you can't be foiled? Such vigils are the dream of fools; your safest way, I do assure you, is to trust us. He who mews us up will find himself in peril. Our honor much prefers to watch itself; and if you take such pains to hinder us from sinning, you put into our heads the wish to sin. If by a husband I were thus restrained I 'd feel a mighty longing to justify his fears.

Sganarelle, *to Ariste.*

Behold, my fine preceptor, the result of your instructions! Can you hear *that* without emotion?

Ariste.

Brother, such talk is only meant in jest; but there is truth in what she says. Her sex desires to enjoy a little freedom. 'T is a great mistake to treat it too austerely. Your distrustful cares and locks and bars can't make the virtue of our wives and daughters. Honor it is which holds them to their duty; not the severity with which we treat them. To speak to you quite frankly, the woman who is virtuous from constraint alone is an unnatural being; 't would be in vain to watch her every step. It is a woman's heart we ought to win. No matter what precautions I might take, I could not think my honor safe with one who only needed opportunity, if desires assailed her, to succumb.

Sganarelle.

All that is idle talk.

Ariste.

So be it; but I must always hold that we should train up youth in cheerfulness, gently

reprove its faults, and never frighten it with the name of virtue. These maxims I have followed in my care of Léonor. I have not made crimes of little freedoms; to all her girlish fancies I consent, and never, thank God, have I had reason to regret this course. I have allowed her to enjoy fine parties, pastimes, balls, and comedies. Such things are useful, as I think, to form young peoples' minds. The schooling of the world, in the atmosphere of which we have to live, gives better teaching, to my mind, than books. True, she is fond of buying ribbons, linen, clothes — why not? I *like* to please her; those are pleasures which we surely, having means, may grant to girls. Her father's will requires her to marry me; but, for all that, I will not be a tyrant to her. Our years, I know, are out of due proportion, and I shall leave her free to choose. If my fortune of four thousand crowns a year, the utmost tenderness, and a complying spirit should offset to her mind the inequality of age, then she shall marry me. If not, I mean that she shall choose elsewhere. I know that she might find a happier fate without me; and I would rather see her married to another than let her hand be given to me against her will.

SGANARELLE.

Hey! how sweet he is! — sugar and honey both!

ARISTE.

Well, 't is my nature, and I thank heaven for it. Never will I follow those harsh maxims which make our children count their fathers' days.

SGANARELLE.

But all this freedom given to youth is not so easily withdrawn. Her ways of thinking will not suit you when the time comes to change her mode of life.

ARISTE.

Why should she change it?

SGANARELLE.

Why?

ARISTE.

Yes.

SGANARELLE.

That I can't say.

ARISTE.

Honor is not injured by it.

SGANARELLE.

What! if you marry her you mean to let her have the liberty we see her taking as a girl?

Ariste.

Why not?

Sganarelle.

Shall you be so complying as to let her keep her frippery and her *mouches?*

Ariste.

Undoubtedly.

Sganarelle.

And suffer her, with giddy brains, to go to balls and places of assembly?

Ariste.

Indeed I shall.

Sganarelle.

And let young sparks invade your house?

Ariste.

What then?

Sganarelle.

And play at cards and give her presents?

Ariste.

So be it.

Sganarelle.

And make her listen to their flatteries?

Ariste.

I consent.

SGANARELLE.

And you will look with tranquil eye upon the visits of these dandies?

ARISTE.

That 's understood.

SGANARELLE.

You 're an old fool. (*To Isabelle*) Go in; you shall hear no more of these outrageous precepts.

SCENE THIRD

ARISTE, SGANARELLE, LÉONOR, LISETTE

ARISTE.

I shall rely upon my wife's fidelity, and hope to live as I have always lived.

SGANARELLE.

What pleasure I shall feel when his wife dupes him!

ARISTE.

I know not for what fate my star gave birth to me, but this I know, if you escape what you predict for me, no one can say it is your doing. Your caution is all that 's needed to produce it.

Sganarelle.

Oh! laugh away, old scoffer; what can be funnier than a sexagenary dupe?

Léonor.

I 'll guarantee him from that fate, if it be so he takes my troth in marriage. He may be sure of that. But let me tell you that my soul, if I were *your* wife, would not pledge itself.

Lisette.

No; conscience binds our souls to those who trust us; but promises are empty words to such as you.

Sganarelle.

Hush! cursèd tongue, ill-taught and insolent!

Ariste.

Brother, you brought that silly talk upon yourself. Adieu. Cast off this temper, and be warned that to lock up a wife is ill-advised. I am your humble servant.

Sganarelle.

I 'm not yours.

SCENE FOURTH

SGANARELLE, *alone.*

Ha! how well suited for each other! What a fine family they'll make, — a ludicrous old man, playing the dandy with a withered body; a masterful and most coquettish girl; impudent servants! No, Wisdom herself would waste both sense and reason in striving to correct a household such as that. Isabelle would lose in their companionship the seeds of honor she has gained from me. *That* I'll prevent, and take her back among the cabbages and turkeys.

SCENE FIFTH

VALÈRE, ERGASTE, SGANARELLE

VALÈRE, *at the back of the stage.*

There he is, Ergaste! that Argus whom I hate; the cruel guardian of my love.

SGANARELLE, *thinking himself alone.*

What can be more amazing than the corruption of the morals of our present day!

VALÈRE.

I'd fain accost him if I could, and try to make acquaintance with him.

Sganarelle, *thinking himself alone.*

Instead of that stern rule which made the bulwark of our ancient honor, youth, now absolutely libertine, takes —

Valère, *bowing to Sganarelle at a distance.*

He does not see it is to him I bow.

Ergaste.

Perhaps his worst eye is on this side; let us try the other.

Sganarelle, *thinking himself alone.*

I shall leave the place; life in a town produces in me —

Valère, *coming nearer.*

I must try in some way to present myself.

Sganarelle, *listening.*

Eugh! I thought that I heard voices. (*Thinking himself alone.*) In the country, thanks to heaven! the follies of the time will not afflict my sight —

Ergaste, *to Valère.*

Go up to him.

SGANARELLE, *listening.*

Who's there? (*Hearing nothing more.*) My ears are buzzing. There the pastimes of our wives are limited to — (*Sees Valère, who bows to him.*) Is that to me?

ERGASTE, *to Valère.*

Go nearer.

SGANARELLE, *paying no attention to Valère.*

There, no popinjays can come — (*Valère bows again.*) What the devil! (*Turns round and sees Ergaste, who bows to him on the other side.*) Another! What flourishing of hats!

VALÈRE.

Monsieur, perhaps our salutations may disturb you.

SGANARELLE.

Perhaps they do.

VALÈRE.

But indeed, the honor of your acquaintance would be to me so great a happiness, so sweet a pleasure, that I was seized with a desire to salute you.

SGANARELLE.

So be it.

Valère.

And to say to you, without disguise, that I am wholly at your service.

Sganarelle.

I believe it.

Valère.

I have the great good fortune to be your neighbor; for which I render thanks to fate.

Sganarelle.

Then you do well.

Valère.

But, monsieur, have you heard the news they tell at court? They say 't is true.

Sganarelle.

What 's that to me?

Valère.

Most people have some little curiosity for news. You 'll surely go to see the fête prepared superbly for our Dauphin's birthday?

Sganarelle.

If I choose.

VALÈRE.

It must be owned that Paris affords us charming pleasures which we cannot find elsewhere. The provinces are dull and solitary. How do you pass your time?

SGANARELLE.

Minding my own affairs.

VALÈRE.

But the mind needs relaxation; it succumbs at times from close attention to our serious cares. In the evenings, what do you do before you go to bed?

SGANARELLE.

That which I please.

VALÈRE.

Of course; no answer could be better; good sense dictates that we should always do that which we please. If I did not fear your mind was too much occupied, I would go to see you sometimes after supper.

SGANARELLE.

Good-day to you.

SCENE SIXTH

Valère, Ergaste

Valère.

What do you think of that queer madman?

Ergaste.

He meets you like a were-wolf, and growls an answer.

Valère.

Ha! I am furious.

Ergaste.

What about?

Valère.

What about, indeed! I am furious to see the girl I love in the power of such a savage, — a watchful dragon whose severity does not allow her to enjoy one moment's liberty.

Ergaste.

But that is in your favor; and on its consequences your love may found great hopes. Let me tell you, to support your mind, that a woman who is watched is partly won, and the black moods of husbands or of fathers are sure to advance the interests of a lover. I don't make

love myself, 't is my least talent, but I have helped a score of others, and all declare their greatest luck came through the angry husbands, the sulky brutes who without sense or reason control the conduct of their wives, and, proudly conscious of the name of husband, scold them before the eyes of aspirants. That is the time, they say, to reap advantage; the sharp vexation of the lady, whom the compassionate witness pities softly, is a fine held on which to push things onward. In short, the sternness of this cruel guardian is a good helper to your love.

VALÈRE.

But for the four months I have loved her ardently I have never found one moment in which to speak with her.

ERGASTE.

Love as a rule makes men inventive; but you are not so. If I had been —

VALÈRE.

Pray what would you have done? I tell you that this brute is always with her; and there are neither maids nor valets in the house, from whom the flattery of a little recompense might gain assistance.

ERGASTE.

Do you mean she does not yet know that you love her?

VALÈRE.

That is a point on which my hopes are not assured. Wherever that sulky fellow takes her she sees me like a shadow by her side; daily my eyes have tried to tell her the ardor of my love; they have said much, but, alas! I do not know if she has understood their language.

ERGASTE.

'T is true such language is at times obscure if it has no interpreter in voice or writing.

VALÈRE.

What can I do to escape this great anxiety and learn if Isabelle has guessed my love? Show me some way.

ERGASTE.

Ha! that is what we must discover. Let us go in at once, to ruminate it better.

END OF FIRST ACT.

Act Second

SCENE FIRST

ISABELLE, SGANARELLE

SGANARELLE.

YES, I know the house, also I know the man, from the description that your lips have given me.

ISABELLE, *aside.*

Oh, Heaven! be propitious to me, and help this artful stratagem of an innocent love!

SGANARELLE.

You say his name is Valère?

ISABELLE.

Yes.

SGANARELLE.

Well, rest in peace; go to your room and leave the matter with me; I 'll speak at once to that young rattle-pate.

ISABELLE, *aside as she goes away.*

It is a bold thing for a girl to do; but the unjust rigor with which he treats me will surely, to all upright minds, be my excuse.

SCENE SECOND

SGANARELLE, *alone.*

I 'll lose no time. 'T is here. (*Raps at Valère's door.*) Who 's there? Holà! I say, holà, there! some one! I should not be surprised, after what I 've heard, if this were he who met me lately in that specious way. Well, I must hasten to put his foolish hope —

SCENE THIRD

SGANARELLE, ERGASTE, VALÈRE

SGANARELLE, *to Ergaste who rushes out suddenly.*

The devil take the clumsy ox who to upset me rushes between my legs in this way!

VALÈRE.

Monsieur, I much regret —

SGANARELLE.

Ha! you are the man I seek.

VALÈRE.

I, monsieur?

SGANARELLE.

You. I think your name is Valère?

VALÈRE.

Yes

SGANARELLE.

I have come to talk with you, if you 'll permit.

VALÈRE.

Can I be fortunate enough to do you service?

SGANARELLE.

No; but I intend myself to do you a good turn, and that is what has brought me to your house.

VALÈRE.

To my house, monsieur?

SGANARELLE.

Yes, to your house. Why are you so surprised?

VALÈRE.

Have I not reason? My soul, enchanted with this honor —

SGANARELLE.

A truce to compliments, I beg of you.

VALÈRE.

Will you come in?

SGANARELLE.

There is no occasion.

VALÈRE.

Monsieur, I entreat —

SGANARELLE.

No, I shall not go farther.

VALÈRE.

While you stay here I cannot listen to you.

SGANARELLE.

I shall not budge.

VALÈRE.

Well then, I 'm forced to yield. (*Calls within*) Make haste, bring chairs, since monsieur is resolved —

SGANARELLE.

I shall speak standing.

VALÈRE.

Oh! that I cannot suffer.

SGANARELLE

Ha! odious restraints!

VALÈRE.

Such incivility would be intolerable.

SGANARELLE.

'T is one far greater not to listen to those who wish to speak to us.

VALÈRE.

Well, I 'll obey you, then.

SGANARELLE.

You can't do better. (*They go through great ceremonies about putting on their hats.*) These forms are most unnecessary. Do you intend to listen to me?

VALÈRE.

Undoubtedly; with all my heart.

SGANARELLE.

Are you aware, monsieur, that I am guardian of a rather young and passably good-looking girl, who lodges in this quarter and whose name is Isabelle?

VALÈRE.

Yes.

SGANARELLE.

Well, if you know it I need not inform you. But do you also know that, having found her charms attractive, they touch me otherwise than as a guardian, and she is therefore destined to the honor of my bed?

VALÈRE.

No.

SGANARELLE.

Then I inform you of it; and it is proper that your pursuit should henceforth, if you please, leave her in peace.

VALÈRE.

Pursuit! what, mine, monsieur?

SGANARELLE.

Yes, yours. Let us be done with feigning.

VALÈRE.

Who told you that my heart was smitten by her?

SGANARELLE.

One in whose word I place belief.

VALÈRE.

But who?

SGANARELLE.

Herself.

VALÈRE.

She told you that?

SGANARELLE.

Yes, she herself. As a virtuous girl, who has loved me since her childhood, she has just told me this in perfect confidence. She charges me, moreover, to inform you that since you have

followed all her steps her heart, which your pursuit has outraged, interprets but too well the language of your eyes; your secret wishes are well-known to her, and she bids me say you give yourself superfluous trouble in trying to express a love which affronts the friendship that she feels for me.

VALÈRE.

'T was she, you say, who made you —

SGANARELLE.

Yes, who made me come to give you frankly this plain message: Seeing the ardor of your soul, she would have sooner let you know her mind could she have found a person to intrust with this commission. At last, the pain of such extreme constraint induces her to seek my help; she wishes me to warn you that to all but me her heart is interdicted; that your eyes have said enough, and if you have any brains at all you will take other courses. Adieu until we meet again; I have said all I had to tell you.

VALÈRE, *in a low tone.*

Ergaste, what think you of this strange affair?

SGANARELLE, *aside.*

He is quite dumfounded.

ERGASTE, *low to Valère.*

As I conjecture, there 's nothing in all this that need alarm you. I think that some sly mystery lies beneath it, for I am certain such advice is not from one who wants to see the love you give her cease.

SGANARELLE, *aside.*

He takes the warning as he ought.

VALÈRE, *low to Ergaste.*

You think a secret meaning —

ERGASTE, *low to Valère.*

Yes, but he 's watching us; let us go in and so escape his eyes.

SCENE FOURTH

SGANARELLE, *alone.*

How his confusion shows upon his face! he little thought, no doubt, to get that message. I must call Isabelle. She shows the fruit that education ripens in the soul. Virtue is all her care; in that her soul is so absorbed that the mere glances of a man offend her.

SCENE FIFTH

ISABELLE, SGANARELLE

ISABELLE, *in a low voice as she enters.*

I fear that Valère, full of his own passion, may not perceive the meaning of my message. Dare I, imprisoned in these fetters, risk another which will speak more clearly?

SGANARELLE.

I have returned.

ISABELLE.

What happened?

SGANARELLE.

A great effect followed your message; the man has had his dose. He tried, at first, to deny his heart was sick; but when I told him I was your ambassador he stopped, quite silent and confused. I think he'll not recover from that blow.

ISABELLE.

Ah! do not trust to that! on the contrary, I fear that he will only plan some fresh attempt.

SGANARELLE.

What reason have you to say that?

ISABELLE.

You had scarcely left the house when, sitting at my window to get the air, I saw a young man in the alley who, all at once, gave me a most surprising salutation on the part of that impertinent Valère. He flung a box straight through my window, and in it was a letter, sealed. I tried to throw it back at once, but already he was half-way down the street. My heart, I felt within me, swelled with anger.

SGANARELLE.

Just see the sly rascality of that!

ISABELLE.

It is my duty to return both box and letter to that insulting lover. Where can I find a man to take them? for I dare not ask that you —

SGANARELLE.

On the contrary, my dearest, it only proves to me the more your love and your fidelity. My heart accepts the errand with delight, and you have pleased me more than I can say.

ISABELLE, *giving him the box.*

Then here they are.

SGANARELLE.

Good. Now let us see what he has dared to write to you.

ISABELLE.

Oh, heavens, no! be sure you do not open it.

SGANARELLE.

Why not?

ISABELLE.

He would think that I had done so. No girl of honor would ever read the letters of a man if sent in that way; the curiosity that made her do so would show a secret pleasure in the act. I think it right his letter be returned at once, the seal unbroken, that he may know without delay the marked contempt my honor feels for him. His love will thenceforth lose all hope, and try no more such futile stratagems.

SGANARELLE.

She is right in what she says. Yes, love, your virtue charms me, and your prudence too. I see my lessons budding in your soul; you prove yourself most worthy to become my wife.

ISABELLE.

But still I would not thwart your wishes. The letter is in your hands and you can open it.

SGANARELLE.

No, no, I do not wish to do so; your reasons are too good. I shall go now and execute the errand that you give me; 't is only a few steps from here, and a few words are all I need to say; then I 'll return to set your mind at rest.

SCENE SIXTH

SGANARELLE, *alone.*

In what delight my soul doth float when I contemplate so much virtue! A treasury of honor in my house! To think a look of love an outrage! to receive a lover's letter as an insult! and so return it, by myself, unopened, to the gallant! I wonder if my brother's ward would do the same. Upon my word! girls are precisely what we make them be. (*Raps on Valère's door.*) Holà!

SCENE SEVENTH

SGANARELLE, ERGASTE

ERGASTE.

Who is it?

SGANARELLE.

Here, tell your master not to dare to write more letters and send them in these gilded

boxes, for Isabelle is greatly irritated. See, she would not even break the seal; he can judge by that the value that she puts upon his love, and what success he may expect to win. (*Gives Ergaste the box and letter.*)

SCENE EIGHTH

Valère, Ergaste

Valère.

What has that sulky brute just given you?

Ergaste.

This letter, monsieur, and this box, declaring that Isabelle has just received them from you with great displeasure. She would not even, so he says, unseal the letter. Pray read it quickly and let me see if I 'm mistaken in my thoughts.

Valère *reads.*

" This letter will no doubt surprise you. The intention of writing it and the manner in which I send it may both seem very bold. But I find myself placed in a position where I can no longer regard appearances. The just horror of a marriage with which I am threatened in six days obliges me to risk all things; and being resolved

to escape it in some way, no matter what, I have thought that I might choose you rather than choose despair. But do not think that you owe this wholly to my unfortunate destiny. It is not the constraint which I endure that has given birth to my feelings for you; although it is that which has forced me to testify them, and to lay aside the forms and proprieties which my sex should regard. It now depends on you to say if I shall soon be yours; I wait only until you let me know the intentions of your love to let you know in turn the resolution I have come to. I beg you to remember that time presses; and that two hearts which love each other need but half a word to tell their meaning."

Ergaste

Hey! monsieur, what say you? Is n't the trick original? She 's none so ignorant for a mere young girl! but who 'd have thought her capable of these frauds of love?

Valère.

Ah! she is adorable! This token of her mind and love doubles my tenderness, and adds to all the other sentiments her beauty inspires in my —

Ergaste.

Hush! the dupe returns; reflect on what you have to say to him.

SCENE NINTH

Sganarelle, Valère, Ergaste

Sganarelle, *thinking himself alone.*

Oh, doubly, trebly blest this edict by which the luxury of women's dress is now prohibited. The trials of husbands will cease to be so heavy, for wives will find a curb on their demands. Oh, how I thank the king for this decree! I only wish that he would do for coquetry what he now has done for guipure and for filagree. I 've bought a copy of this edict, that Isabelle may read it out aloud; it shall be made, in place of other entertainments, the occupation of our evenings after supper. (*Sees Valère.*) Ha, my fair-haired dandy! will you still send your billets-doux in golden boxes? Do you think my lady is a young coquette, craving intrigue and open to your flattery? You saw with what an air she took your missive; trust me, you 're wasting powder on the sparrows! She loves me, she is virtuous, and your courtship angers

her. Take aim elsewhere, and leave this field, you and your baggage.

Valère.

Yes, yes; your merit, to which all must bow, is to my mind an obstacle too great. 'T would be indeed a folly if my faithful love dared to compete with yours for the heart of Isabelle.

Sganarelle.

Yes, truly, a great folly.

Valère.

In fact, had I but known that my poor heart would find a rival so redoubtable, I never would have let it yield to the allurement of her charms.

Sganarelle.

That I believe.

Valère.

I have no further hope. Monsieur, I yield to you; and I do it without a murmur.

Sganarelle.

You do well.

Valère.

The laws of fate ordain it; so many virtues radiate from your person I should do wrong to view with angry eye the tender sentiments that Isabelle feels for you.

SGANARELLE.

Of course; that 's understood.

VALÈRE.

Yes, yes, I leave the field to you; but I entreat (and 't is the only favor, monsieur, that a wretched lover whose misery you have caused will ask of you), I entreat you to tell Isabelle that while my heart for three months past has worshipped her, that love is stainless and has never once thought a single thing that could offend her honor —

SGANARELLE.

Yes.

VALÈRE.

That, following the instincts of my soul, my purpose was to obtain her for my wife if fate had not opposed in you, who captivate her heart, an obstacle to this great hope —

SGANARELLE.

Yes, certainly.

VALÈRE.

And that, whatever happens, she must not think her charms can leave my memory; no matter to what pain the heavens condemn me, it is my fate to love her until death; and, that

if anything now stops my suit it is the just respect your virtues merit.

Sganarelle.

That is sound talk. I 'll go at once and say those words to Isabelle, for they will not displease her. But, take my advice, endeavor if you can, to tear this passion from your heart. Adieu.

Ergaste, *to Valère.*

Well duped, indeed!

SCENE TENTH

Sganarelle, *alone.*

I pity him, poor wretch! so full of love! Ha! 't was an evil day for him when the fancy seized him to take a fort I had already won!

SCENE ELEVENTH

Sganarelle, Isabelle

Sganarelle.

No lover ever showed such trouble as he when I returned his letter still unopened. He lost all hope at once and so withdrew, conjuring

me to give you his last message, namely: that in loving you he never once had thought a thing that could offend your honor; following the instincts of his heart, his sole desire was to obtain you for his wife if fate had not opposed, in me who captivate your heart, an obstacle; and also, he bid me say, no matter what may happen, you must not think that he can love you less, because, whatever pain the heavens inflict upon him, it is his fate to love you until death; and that if anything now stops his suit it is the just respect my virtues merit. Those are his very words, and, far from blaming him, I think him an honest man and pity him for loving you.

Isabelle, *aside.*

His love does not betray my secret trust; his eyes have always told me it was innocent.

Sganarelle.

What did you say?

Isabelle.

That it is hard to find you pity one whom I hate worse than death; and if you loved me as you say you do, you 'd feel the affront to me of such a suit.

SGANARELLE.

But he was not aware you loved me; and I think that, his intentions being virtuous, his love does not deserve —

ISABELLE.

Is it virtuous, tell me, to abduct a woman? Would a man of honour form a design to tear me from your hands and marry me by force? As if I were a girl to bear my life after such infamy!

SGANARELLE.

What is it you mean?

ISABELLE.

Yes, I am told that traitorous lover talks of obtaining me by treachery. I don't know by what secret means he knows that you intend to give your hand to me within a week — for 't was only yesterday you told me of it; but he has found it out, and will forestall, he says, the day that would unite my life to yours.

SGANARELLE.

All that means nothing.

ISABELLE.

Oh! pardon me, I beg; a very virtuous man, I know! who only feels for me —

SGANARELLE.

Yes, he was wrong; but do not jest in that way.

ISABELLE.

Your gentleness maintains his folly. If you had spoken sharply from the first he would have feared your wrath and my resentment. 'T is since his letter was returned that he has formed the scheme of seizing me. His love persists, so I have heard, in thinking I would flee this marriage, and that, no matter what I say, I should rejoice if he would drag me from your arms.

SGANARELLE.

He must be mad.

ISABELLE.

To you he plays a part; his object is to fool you. I beg you to believe this traitor seeks only to delude you by those speeches. I am indeed unfortunate, since, with all the care I take to live with honor and rebuff the advances of a base seducer, I 'm still exposed to other and worse enterprises.

SGANARELLE.

Dearest, fear nothing.

ISABELLE.

I tell you frankly, that if you do not take some steps against this bold design, and find some means to rid me of this man's persecution, I will abandon everything, and fly from these affronts. I —

SGANARELLE.

Don't fret so much, my little wife; I 'll seek him out and teach him a good lesson.

ISABELLE.

Tell him from me it is in vain that he denies the scheme; I know it on good authority; and, being thus warned, no matter what he undertakes to do I defy him to take me unawares. Tell him 't is useless to waste time and sighs now that he knows my sentiments from you; and if he does not wish to cause a great misfortune he will not need to have a thing said twice.

SGANARELLE.

I will say all that 's necessary.

ISABELLE.

But say it in such a tone that he will see I mean it.

SGANARELLE.

I 'll forget nothing; that I promise you.

ISABELLE.

I shall await you with impatience. Make haste, I beg of you; I languish in the moments of your absence.

SGANARELLE.

Yes, dear heart, my darling! I'll return at once.

SCENE TWELFTH

SGANARELLE, *alone.*

Is there a better or more virtuous girl? Ah! I am happy; what joy to find a wife who equals all my wishes! Yes, this is what a woman should be; no fine coquette, like some I know who make themselves town-talk until half Paris points the finger at their honest husbands. (*Raps at Valère's door.*) Holà! my enterprising gallant!

SCENE THIRTEENTH

VALÈRE, SGANARELLE, ERGASTE

VALÈRE.

Monsieur, what brings you here again?

SGANARELLE.

Your follies.

VALÈRE.

How?

SGANARELLE.

You know what I mean. I thought you wiser. You tried to fool me with fine speeches, and all the while were keeping underhand your crazy hopes. I wished to treat you kindly, but you have forced me finally to wrath. Are you not ashamed, being what you are, to turn your mind to such a project? How can you venture to abduct a virtuous girl and thwart a marriage which makes all her happiness?

VALÈRE.

Monsieur, who told you this strange tale?

SGANARELLE.

I, at least, shall not dissemble; 't was Isabelle, who, for the last time, sends you word by me that she has shown you plainly whom she chooses; that her heart, now wholly mine, is shocked by such a project; that she will die sooner than bear this horror, and you will cause some terrible misfortune unless you put an end at once to these embarrassments.

VALÈRE.

If it be true that she said that, my love has nothing more to seek. In those plain words I

see that all must terminate, and I revere the order that she gives me.

SGANARELLE.

If it be true! Then do you doubt it, and think I feign the indignation that she sends through me? Do you desire that she herself should explain her heart to you? I willingly consent. Come with me; and you shall see if I have warned you truly, and whether her young heart can hesitate between us. (*Raps at his own door.*)

SCENE FOURTEENTH

ISABELLE, SGANARELLE, VALÈRE, ERGASTE

ISABELLE.

What! have you brought him here! With what intention? Do you take his cause in hand against me? and will you, charmed with his rare merits, force me to love him and admit his visits?

SGANARELLE.

No, my love, your heart is far too dear to me for that. But the warnings I have given him from you he thinks improbable; believes 't is I who speak, and put into your mouth this hatred

for himself and love for me. So now I wish to draw him, once for all, by you, from that mistaken thought which feeds his love.

ISABELLE, *to Valère.*

Is not my soul laid bare before your eyes? Can you still doubt my wishes?

VALÈRE.

Yes; for all that has been told me in your name, madame, may well surprise me. I have doubted it, I own; and this supreme decision which now decides the fate of my great love must be so agitating to me that I think you cannot take offence if my heart pleads that you will give it twice.

ISABELLE.

But that decision ought not to surprise you; those are my sentiments he made you hear; I hold them founded on such equity that I may openly proclaim them. Yes, I desire to make known, and hope to be believed, that fate has offered two persons to my choice, who, by the different feelings they inspire in me, cause all the emotions of my troubled heart. One, by a righteous choice where honor guides me, has all my tenderness and my respect; the other, in return for his affection has my just anger and

my deep aversion. The presence of the one is dear and pleasing to me, it fills my soul with perfect gladness; the other, by the mere sight of him, inspires within my heart strange secret impulses of hate and horror. To see myself the wife of one is all my hope; and rather than belong to him I loathe, I 'd lose my life. I have said enough to show my righteous feelings; and now, for I have suffered too long these cruel torments, the one I love, using all diligence, should cause the one I hate to give up hope, and by a happy marriage free my fate from tortures which to me are worse than death.

Sganarelle.

Yes, darling, I intend to satisfy those wishes.

Isabelle.

It is the only way to make me happy.

Sganarelle.

Ah! you shall soon be that.

Isabelle.

I know it may seem shameful for a girl thus to express her feelings —

Sganarelle.

No, no!

Isabelle.

But in the pass to which my fate has brought me, such freedom ought to be allowed; I feel I may, without a blush, make this avowal to one whom I already look to as my husband —

Sganarelle.

Yes, my poor darling, treasure of my heart!

Isabelle.

And I ask him now, for pity's sake, to prove his love —

Sganarelle.

Yes, sweetest, kiss my hand.

Isabelle.

And, without more delay, conclude a marriage which is my only hope. (*Turns to Sganarelle as if to embrace him, but gives her hand to Valère.*)

Sganarelle.

Yes, yes, my child, my little darling, you shall not languish long, I promise you. (*To Valère*) Now go; you see I did not make her speak. 'T was she herself, and her whole soul aspires to me alone.

VALÈRE.

Madame, enough explained! I see by these few words to what you urge me, and I will shortly rid you of the sight of him who is repugnant to your soul.

ISABELLE.

You cannot give me greater pleasure; that sight indeed is hard to bear; in fact, 't is odious, and the horror that I feel —

SGANARELLE.

Hey, hey!

ISABELLE.

Does that offend you? Must I —

SGANARELLE.

No, no, my dear, I don't say that; and yet, to tell the truth, I pity him, and think your hatred is too plainly shown.

ISABELLE.

I cannot show it less in such a meeting.

VALÈRE.

Yes, you shall be content; within three days your eyes shall see no more the object which you loathe.

ISABELLE.

Then all is well. Adieu.

SGANARELLE, *to Valère.*

I pity your misfortune; but —

VALÈRE.

No, no, you 'll hear no groans from me. Madame does justice on both of us. I leave you now to make my plans and carry out her wishes. Adieu.

SGANARELLE.

Poor lad! his grief is great. Embrace me. (*Embraces Valère.*)

SCENE FIFTEENTH

ISABELLE, SGANARELLE

SGANARELLE.

I think him greatly to be pitied.

ISABELLE.

Oh, no! he 's not.

SGANARELLE.

Your love has touched me to the quick, my darling, and I desire to reward it. Eight days

is far too long for your impatience; to-morrow I will marry you, and not invite —

ISABELLE.

To-morrow!

SGANARELLE.

Ah! modesty, I see, will make you feign reluctance. But I know the joy that fills your heart; you wish the thing were done already.

ISABELLE.

But —

SGANARELLE.

Now let us go and make our preparations.

ISABELLE, *aside.*

Oh, Heaven! inspire me with some defence.

END OF SECOND ACT.

Act Third

SCENE FIRST

ISABELLE, *alone, in the street.*

YES, death seems infinitely less to fear than this most fatal marriage to which his will constrains me; and what I do to escape its horrors ought to find mercy from my censors. Time presses; it is dark; I go, without a fear, to trust my future to a lover's honor.

SCENE SECOND

SGANARELLE, ISABELLE

SGANARELLE, *speaking to those within.*

I shall soon return; to-morrow is to be —

ISABELLE.

Oh, Heaven!

SGANARELLE.

What! is that you, my pretty one? Where are you going so late? You told me you were weary, and should retire to your room after I left you; you even asked me to suffer you, when I returned, to rest until to-morrow.

ISABELLE.

'T is true; but —

SGANARELLE.

But what?

ISABELLE.

I am quite confused; I don't know how to tell you my excuse.

SGANARELLE.

How so? What can it be?

ISABELLE.

Oh! a surprising secret; it is my sister who compels me to go out, and who, for a purpose that I greatly blame, is in my chamber, where I have shut her up.

SGANARELLE.

What!

ISABELLE.

Would you believe it? — she loves the gallant we have lately banished.

SGANARELLE.

Valère?

ISABELLE.

Distractedly. Her passion is so great there 's nothing like it, and you can judge what power

it has since she has come by night to tell me of it, and say she cannot live unless her soul obtains the joy she covets. It seems that for a year or more, before he knew me, their hearts held secret commerce; in fact, their love being young, they had pledged their mutual faith to marry —

Sganarelle.

Oh, the hussy!

Isabelle.

And now, having heard of the despair into which I've cast the man she loves, she came to-night to beg that I would help her to renew a tie the loss of which has pierced her soul; and suffer her to see this lover, under my name, in the little alley 'neath my window; that she may tell him, in a voice like mine, the tender sentiments she still retains, so that to her the love he since has felt for me may turn again.

Sganarelle.

And you think all that —

Isabelle.

I? I am outraged by it. "Sister," I said, "you must be crazy. Do you not blush to feel this love for the sort of man who changes daily? Have you forgot your sex, and would you cheat

the hopes of him whom heaven itself has given you in marriage?

Sganarelle.

Ha! he deserves all this, and I am glad of it.

Isabelle.

In short, I gave her many reasons why I should reject her prayer, reproaching her for such base treachery. But still she urged her ardent wishes; she wept, she sighed, and said so often that I should drive her to despair if I denied this comfort to her heart, that I was forced to yield, in spite of my own judgment. And now, to justify this sly intrigue, I was on my way to fetch Lucrèce (whose virtues you have praised to me so often) to come and sleep with me — but you 've surprised me by your quick return.

Sganarelle.

No, no; I will not have this mystery in my house. I might consent if it concerned my brother only, but some one on the way may see you; she whom I honor with my hand must not be merely chaste, but unsuspected. Come, let us send away this worthless girl, her, and her passion!

Isabelle.

Ah! that would humble her too much; and she would have the right to blame me for the small restraint I've put upon my tongue. If she must go, let me at least dismiss her by myself.

Sganarelle.

Well, well, so be it.

Isabelle.

But hide yourself, I beg of you; say nothing to her when she leaves the house.

Sganarelle.

Yes, for your sake I will restrain my wrath. But the moment she has left the house I shall seek my brother — Oh, the joy of telling him all this.

Isabelle.

But do not name me, I conjure you. Good-night. I'll do your bidding, and will then retire.

Sganarelle.

Adieu until to-morrow, darling. (*Alone*) With what impatience I shall seek my brother and tell him his mischance! He can't stand this, old man, for all his fustian. I would not lose this luck for twenty crowns!

ISABELLE *speaking within.*

Yes, I feel for your distress, but what you ask me, sister, is impossible. My honor is too dear to me to run so great a risk. Adieu; go now, before 't is any later.

SGANARELLE, *in a low voice.*

She comes, I think, and angry too. I 'll lock the door for fear she should return.

ISABELLE, *in a low voice, coming out.*

Oh, Heaven! do not abandon me in this attempt.

SGANARELLE, *aside.*

Where is she going? I will follow her.

ISABELLE, *aside.*

The darkness favors me, at least.

SGANARELLE.

To Valère's house! With what intention?

SCENE THIRD

VALÈRE, ISABELLE, SGANARELLE

VALÈRE, *coming out hastily.*

Yes, I must make a strong attempt to-night to speak to — Who 's there?

ISABELLE, *to Valère.*

Don't make a noise, Valère; 't is I, 't is Isabelle.

SGANARELLE, *aside.*

A lie, you slut! *you* are not she; the honor that you cast aside she follows and obeys; you have taken falsely both her voice and name.

ISABELLE, *to Valère.*

But — unless by sacred marriage you —

VALÈRE.

That is the one sole purpose of my life, and here I pledge my honor that to-morrow we will go where it can be performed.

SGANARELLE, *aside.*

Poor fool who thus deceives himself!

VALÈRE.

Enter my house with confidence. I 'll brave the power of your duped Argus, and sooner than let him take you from my love, I 'd stab him to the heart a thousand times.

SCENE FOURTH

SGANARELLE, *alone.*

Ha! I promise you that I've no wish to part your loves. Infamous creature! I am not jealous of the gift she makes you. — But now, let us surprise him with that brazen girl at once; the memory of her father, so respected, joined to my interest in her sister, requires that we try to save at least her honor. (*Raps on the door of a commissary.*) Holà!

SCENE FIFTH

SGANARELLE, A COMMISSARY, A NOTARY, A LACQUEY *with a torch*

COMMISSARY.

Who 's there?

SGANARELLE.

Good evening, Commissary; your presence in official robe is needed. Follow me, if you please, and bring a light.

COMMISSARY.

Where are we going?

SGANARELLE.

Where haste is needed.

COMMISSARY.

For what?

SGANARELLE.

To enter a house, and there surprise two persons who must be married instantly. One is a girl belonging to our family, whom, trusting to his honor, a certain Valère has seduced and taken to his house. Her family is noble and most virtuous, but —

COMMISSARY.

If that 's the case, all things combine, for here 's a notary.

SGANARELLE.

Monsieur?

NOTARY.

Yes, a notary of the royal court.

COMMISSARY.

And what is more, a man of honor.

SGANARELLE.

You need not tell me that. Enter this house and, without noise, keep watch that no one leaves it. You shall be well rewarded for your trouble; but do not let your paws be greased.

COMMISSARY.

What! do you think a man whose business 't is to enforce the laws —

SGANARELLE.

What I have said does not accuse your office. I must now proceed to find my brother, and bring him here. (*Aside*) I 'll stir him up, that man who is never angry! (*Raps on Ariste's door.*) Holà!

SCENE SIXTH

ARISTE, SGANARELLE

ARISTE.

Who knocks? Ha, brother! what may you want with me?

SGANARELLE.

Come, smart professor, superannuated fop, I want to show you something fine.

ARISTE.

What is it?

SGANARELLE.

I bring great news!

ARISTE.

But what?

Sganarelle.

Your Léonor, where is she? Please to say.

Ariste.

Why this inquiry? She is at a ball, as I believe, among her friends.

Sganarelle.

Ha, ha! yes, yes! — follow me, and you shall see the sort of ball the damozel attends.

Ariste.

What is all this?

Sganarelle.

You 've trained her well! Oh, no, it is not good to be too stern a censor! We should rule minds by gentleness; distrustful vigilance and bolts and bars can't make the virtue of our wives and daughters! We drive them into evil by austerity! Their sex requires a little liberty! Ha, the sly thing! she takes her fill; virtue in her is highly human!

Ariste.

What is the object of this strange discourse?

Sganarelle.

Ha! my good elder brother, here 's your reward; I would not, for a score of pistoles,

deprive you of this fruit of your mad maxims. Now we see the effect our lessons have produced on the two sisters: one flees a gallant, and the other seeks him.

ARISTE.

But if you do not make the enigma plainer —

SGANARELLE.

The enigma is that her ball is in the house of Monsieur Valère; to-night I saw her go there; and at this present moment she is in his arms.

ARISTE.

Who?

SGANARELLE.

Léonor.

ARISTE.

Cease this jesting, I request you.

SGANARELLE.

I jest! — ho! that is good; jesting indeed! Poor soul! I told you, and I tell it once again, that Valère has your Léonor with him. It seems they pledged their mutual faith before he ever thought of courting Isabelle.

ARISTE.

This tale is so improbable —

Sganarelle.

He 'll not believe it till he sees it! I am furious! Old age, i' faith, is good for nothing if you have nothing here (*taps his forehead*).

Ariste.

Brother, what is it you want?

Sganarelle.

Oh! *I* want nothing. Follow me yourself, and you shall be convinced; you 'll see if I 've imposed upon you, and if their hearts have not been joined a year or more.

Ariste.

It is not likely she would have pledged herself to this engagement without informing me, who have in all things, since her infancy, shown her the utmost kindness, protesting, a hundred times, that I would never thwart her inclinations.

Sganarelle.

Well, your eyes shall judge the matter for themselves. I have already fetched both notary and commissary to the house; it is our interest that the honor she has lost be instantly restored by marriage; for I think you 'll hardly be so base as to take her now with such a stain upon

her,— unless, indeed, you have a few more arguments with which to rise above the jeers of men.

ARISTE.

No, I should never have the weakness to wish to own a heart against its will. But I do not believe —

SGANARELLE.

Ho! the same talk; well, well! he 'll keep these notions up forever.

SCENE SEVENTH

SGANARELLE, ARISTE, A COMMISSARY, A NOTARY

COMMISSARY.

Messieurs, no force can here be used. If your desires are merely for the marriage, your anger can be pacified at once. Both parties wish to marry, and Monsieur Valère has signed the notice that he takes to wife the person who is with him in the house.

ARISTE.

The girl —?

COMMISSARY.

Yes, she is there; but says she will not leave the house until your wishes will consent to theirs.

SCENE EIGHTH

Valère, Commissary, Notary, Ariste, Sganarelle

Valère.

No, messieurs, neither of you can enter here till your consent be given. You know me, who I am; I have done my duty in signing the document which the notary will show you. If it be your intention to approve this marriage, you will put your signatures to that assurance. If not, you shall take my life before you take away from me the object of my love.

Sganarelle.

We have no wish to part you from each other. (*Aside*) He has not yet discovered she is Léonor! I 'll profit by that blunder.

Ariste, *to Valère.*

But is she Léonor?

Sganarelle, *to Ariste in a low voice.*

Hush! hush!

Ariste.

But —

Sganarelle.

Hush, I say.

Ariste.

I wish to know —

SGANARELLE.

Hold your tongue, I tell you.

VALÈRE.

Whatever happens, my word is pledged to Isabelle, and hers to me; if you examine all things well, 't is not a choice you need condemn.

ARISTE, *to Sganarelle.*

But what he says is not —

SGANARELLE.

Be silent, and for good reason, you shall know the secret soon. (*To Valère*) Yes, without further talk we both consent that you shall be the husband of her who now is with you in your house.

COMMISSARY.

Those are the terms in which this document is drawn; the lady's name was left in blank, as she did not appear. Sign it yourselves; her signature can follow yours.

VALÈRE.

I agree to that.

SGANARELLE.

And I insist upon it. (*Aside*) Oh! what a laugh for me! (*Aloud*) Come, brother, sign there.

Ariste.

But why? What is this mystery?

Sganarelle.

The devil! what a fuss! Sign it, you dolt!

Ariste.

He speaks of Isabelle, and you of Léonor.

Sganarelle.

Have we not agreed that if she is there we will leave them to their mutual love?

Ariste.

Yes.

Sganarelle.

Then sign, and I will do the same.

Ariste.

So be it, but I do not comprehend.

Sganarelle.

You 'll be enlightened soon.

Commissary.

We shall presently return.

Sganarelle, *to Ariste.*

Now, then, I 'll tell you the true end of this intrigue. (*They retire to back of stage.*)

SCENE NINTH

Léonor, Lisette, Sganarelle, Ariste

Léonor.

Oh! what martyrdom! How wearisome those foolish gallants are! I 've left the ball on their account.

Lisette.

They all endeavoured to make themselves agreeable to you.

Léonor.

Well, for my part, I think them insupportable, and I prefer the simplest conversation to all the tinsel speeches of those chatterers. They think that everything must bow to their blond periwigs, and fancy they have made a witty speech when, in a vulgar, jesting tone, they twit you foolishly about an old man's love. I know *I* prize an old man's zealous friendship more than all the transports of their giddy brains. But do I not see —?

Sganarelle, *to Ariste.*

Yes, the matter is as I tell you. (*Sees Léonor.*) But here she is, and her maid with her.

Ariste.

Léonor, without being angry, I think I have some reason to complain. You know if I have ever wished to thwart you; and whether I have not, a score of times, assured you that you should have full liberty of choice. And yet your heart, despising my approval, has without my knowledge bound itself not merely in love, but also in marriage. I do not now repent of my kind treatment, but still your conduct certainly has hurt me; the tender friendship I have always shown you did not deserve this action on your part.

Léonor.

I don't know why you say these things to me, but pray believe I am the same as ever; that nothing can change my feelings towards you; and any other love would seem to me a crime. In short, if you would satisfy my heart, a closer tie would soon unite us.

Ariste.

Brother, I wish to know on what foundation you have based —

Sganarelle, *to Léonor.*

What! do you not come from Valère's house? Have you not told us of your amours, saying,

this very day, that you had loved him for a year or more?

LÉONOR.

Who can have said those things of me and taken pains to forge such falsehoods?

—•—

SCENE TENTH

ISABELLE, VALÈRE, LÉONOR, ARISTE, SGANARELLE, LISETTE, ERGASTE, THE COMMISSARY, THE NOTARY

ISABELLE.

Sister, I ask your generous pardon for having smirched your name to gain my liberty. The pressing danger of discovery inspired in my mind this shameful stratagem. Your example, sister, condemns my reckless act; but fate has treated us so differently! (*To Sganarelle*) To you I do not choose to make excuses. I serve you more than I have wronged you. Heaven never made us for each other. I grant I am unworthy of your name; I much prefer to put myself in Valère's hands than feel I do not merit a heart like yours.

VALÈRE, *to Sganarelle.*

But as for me, it is my pride and glory, monsieur, to owe her to your hand.

Ariste.

Brother, you must take this trial calmly. Your actions were the cause of hers. I think you most unfortunate in this, that, knowing you have duped yourself, no one will pity you.

Lisette.

For my part, I am grateful to him; the upshot of his care is exemplary warning.

Léonor.

I do not know if that is to his credit, but I am sure of one thing: that I cannot blame him.

Ergaste.

His star ordained him to the fate of cuckold; and to be one only in bud is for him good luck.

Sganarelle, *rousing himself from his dejection.*

No, I cannot recover from my amazement. This hellish trick confounds my judgment. I do not think that Satan himself would be as wicked as that worthless girl. For her I would have put my hand into the fire and kept it there. Unhappy is the man who trusts a woman; the best are fruitful in malignity; their sex is procreated to damn all mankind. Ha! I renounce

forever their deceitful company, and send them to the devil with all my heart.

ERGASTE.

Good!

ARISTE.

Let us retire to my house. Come, Seigneur Valère, to-morrow we will try to pacify his wrath.

LISETTE, *to the audience.*

And you, if you know any were-wolf husbands, pray send them to our School to see themselves.

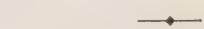
END OF L'ÉCOLE DES MARIS.

MONSIEUR DE POURCEAUGNAC

Comedy-Ballet

IN THREE ACTS

PERSONAGES



Monsieur de Pourceaugnac.
Oronte.
Julie . . . . . *daughter of Oronte.*
Eraste . . . . . *lover of Julie.*
Nérine . . . . . *an intriguing woman.*
Lucette . . . . . *pretending to be a Languedocian*
Sbrigani . . . . . *Neapolitan, an intriguing man.*
First Doctor.
Second Doctor.
An Apothecary.
A Peasant.
A Peasant-woman.
First Porter.
Second Porter.
A Police Officer.
Two Archers.

The scene is in Paris.

MONSIEUR DE POURCEAUGNAC

Act First

SCENE FIRST

ERASTE, A FEMALE MUSICIAN, AND TWO MUSICIANS *singing, several others playing instruments; a* TROUPE OF DANCERS.

ERASTE, *to the Musicians and Dancers.*

FOLLOW the orders which I gave you for the serenade. I shall myself retire, as I do not wish to be observed.

SCENE SECOND

A FEMALE MUSICIAN, AND TWO MUSICIANS, *singing. Several others playing instruments.* A TROUPE OF DANCERS. *This serenade is composed of song, instrumental music, and dances. The words that are*

sung relate to the situation in which Eraste is with Julie, and express the sentiments of two lovers who are crossed in love by the caprice of their parents.

The Female Musician, *singing.*

Shed, lovely night, shed over mortal eyes
Thy poppy's gentle balm.
Let those alone in whose heart passion lies
Wake in this midnight calm.
Thy silence, and the gloom,
Fairer than daylight's bloom,
Yield precious moments for a lover's sighs.

First Musician.

How sweetly fall and rise
True lovers' tender sighs
When naught the joy opposes
Of hearts that Love disposes,
And cruel parents cease
To tyrannize!
How sweetly fall and rise
True lovers' tender sighs,
When naught our joy opposes!

Second Musician.

In vain their harsh endeavor
Our faithful hearts to sever;
True love is conquered never
If we but love forever!
Ever! ever!

All Three, *together.*

Be ours eternal love,
That no constraint can move;
For absence, sorrow, toil, and trouble
Will only make affection double;
When two hearts love on earth
All else is nothing worth!
Then let us vow eternal love;
When true hearts blend on earth
All else is nothing worth!

First Entrance of Ballet.

Dance of two dancing-masters.

Second Entrance of Ballet.

Dance of two pages.

Third Entrance of Ballet.

Four spectators, who have quarrelled during the dance of the two pages, dance fighting, sword in hand.

Fourth Entrance of Ballet.

Two porters separate the combatants and after peace is restored all dance together.

SCENE THIRD

JULIE, ÉRASTE, NÉRINE

JULIE.

Oh, heavens! Éraste, let us be careful we are not surprised. I tremble lest we be seen together and all be lost, since they forbid me to so much as see you.

ÉRASTE.

I 've looked about in all directions, and there 's no one to be seen.

JULIE, *to Nérine.*

Keep watch yourself, Nérine; and do be careful to let no one come.

NÉRINE, *retreating to back of stage.*

Rely on me; say to each other boldly what you have to say.

JULIE, *to Éraste.*

Have you imagined any way to turn things in our favor? and do you think, Éraste, we can escape this horrid marriage my father has got into his head?

Éraste.

We are working hard, at all events; already we 've prepared a lot of batteries to overthrow this foolish plan.

Nérine, *running forward.*

My goodness! here 's your father.

Julie.

Oh! let us part! quick! quick!

Nérine.

No, no, you need not stir; I was mistaken.

Julie.

Good gracious! Nérine, how can you be so silly as to frighten us in this way.

Éraste.

Yes, dearest Julie, we have arranged a quantity of schemes; and I mean to try them all, relying on the promise you have given me. Don't ask to know the wires we pull; you are to be spectator; and (as they do at comedies) 't is best to leave you to the pleasures of surprise, and tell you nothing of what you are to see. Enough to say that we have divers stratagems all ready to produce when needed, and that our clever Nérine and sly Sbrigani have undertaken the affair.

Nérine.

Yes, that is so. Your father must be joking to want to marry you to his Limoges lawyer, Monsieur de Pourceaugnac! — a man he has never seen in all his life, and who is coming here by coach to snatch you from us! Three or four thousand crowns (according to your uncle) is that a reason to reject a lover whom you liked? A girl like you was never born to take a Limousin; if he wants marriage, why does n't he himself go take a wife in Limoges, and leave us here in peace? The very name of Monsieur de Pourceaugnac puts me beside myself! I 'm furious at Monsieur de Pourceaugnac. If there were no other name on earth than Monsieur de Pourceaugnac, I 'd burn my books or break the marriage off, for Madame de Pourceaugnac you shall *not* be! Pourceaugnac! why, it is n't to be endured! No, Pourceaugnac is something that I cannot stand! We 'll play him such a lot of tricks and poke him here and push him there in such a way we 'll soon send back to his native Limoges *Monsieur de Pourceaugnac!*

Éraste.

Here comes our subtle Neapolitan, who will tell us all the news.

SCENE FOURTH

Julie, Éraste, Sbrigani, Nérine

Sbrigani.

Monsieur, the man has come. I saw him where the coach put up last night, three leagues from here; and when he came to breakfast in the kitchen I studied him, and know him all by heart. As for his person, I won't speak of that; you 'll see the style that Nature made him, and whether or not his garments correspond therewith. But, for his mind, I warn you in advance it is the thickest that was ever made; he 'll prove the very stuff for what we want; he 's just the man to tumble into all the snares we set for him.

Éraste.

Are you sure that 's so.

Sbrigani.

Yes, if I 'm a judge of men.

Nérine, *to Julie.*

Madame, this is a famous man. Your matters could not be in better hands; he is the hero of our century for such exploits as these, — a man who, scores of times, has generously risked the

galleys to serve his friends, and, at the peril of his arms and shoulders, knows how to nobly end the worst adventures; a man, such as you see him, who is exiled from his native country for I don't know how many honorable actions which he had generously undertaken.

SBRIGANI.

I am confounded by the praise with which you honor me. I can return it, with far more justice, on *your* marvellous deeds; and chiefly three of them: namely, the credit you acquired when, with such honesty, you plucked at cards for twenty thousand crowns the young foreign nobleman who visited your house; and that false contract that you made so bravely, which ruined a whole family when you denied, with loftiness of soul, receiving certain property intrusted to your care; but, above all, your testimony, so generously given, which hanged two persons who did not deserve it.

NÉRINE.

Those were mere trifles, not worth mentioning; your praises make me blush.

SBRIGANI.

I 'll spare your modesty and say no more. Now, to begin the present matter. We will at

once waylay our old provincial; while you, on your side, must hold the other actors in readiness, when needed, to play our comedy.

Éraste, *to Julie.*

And you, remember *your* part, Julie. To cover our game, be sure you feign, as I have told you, perfect content with all your father's plans.

Julie.

If that is all I have to do, things will go well.

Éraste.

But, dearest Julie, suppose that none of our machinations should succeed?

Julie.

Then I shall tell my father my real sentiments.

Éraste.

And if, against those sentiments, he persists in his design?

Julie.

I shall threaten to take refuge in a convent.

Éraste.

But suppose, in spite of that, he still insists on forcing you to make this marriage?

Julie.

What is it that you desire me to say?

Éraste.

What do I desire that you should say?

Julie.

Yes.

Éraste.

What people say when they are truly in love.

Julie.

But *what?*

Éraste.

That nothing shall compel you to marry, and that you promise, in spite of your father, to be mine.

Julie.

Oh, heavens! Éraste, be satisfied with what I am doing now; do not force the resolutions of my heart as to the future; do not harass my duty by suggestions of a miserable extremity we may never have to meet; and if fate wills that we must come to it, let me at least be drawn along by the current of events.

Éraste.

So be it, then.

Sbrigani.

Hi! here comes our man; let us think of what we have to do.

Nérine.

Goodness! what a shape!

SCENE FIFTH

Monsieur de Pourceaugnac, Sbrigani

Monsieur de Pourceaugnac, *turning half round and speaking to persons behind him.*

Hey, what? What is it? What 's the matter? The devil take this silly town, and the silly people who are in it! Can't a man walk a step without encountering ninnies who stare at him and laugh? Hey! you boobies, attend to your own affairs, and let other folks go their way without grinning in their faces. The devil take me if I don't cuff the first man I see laughing.

Sbrigani, *speaking to same persons.*

What is all this, messieurs? What does this mean? Do you know whom you are speaking to? What business have you to make fun of worthy strangers who visit the town?

Monsieur de Pourceaugnac.

Here 's one sensible man, at least.

Sbrigani, *speaking to same.*

What sort of actions are these? What do you see to laugh at?

Monsieur de Pourceaugnac.

Good!

SBRIGANI.

Is there anything ridiculous in this gentleman?

MONSIEUR DE POURCEAUGNAC.

Yes, that 's it.

SBRIGANI.

Is he different from others?

MONSIEUR DE POURCEAUGNAC.

Am I hump-backed or bandy-legged?

SBRIGANI.

Learn to know your betters.

MONSIEUR DE POURCEAUGNAC.

That 's well said.

SBRIGANI.

Monsieur's appearance shows him worthy of all respect —

MONSIEUR DE POURCEAUGNAC.

That 's very true.

SBRIGANI.

A person of condition —

MONSIEUR DE POURCEAUGNAC.

Yes, a nobleman of Limoges.

Sbrigani.

Man of intelligence —

Monsieur de Pourceaugnac.

And studied law.

Sbrigani.

Who does you great honor by coming to your town —

Monsieur de Pourceaugnac.

No doubt of that.

Sbrigani.

Monsieur is not a man to be laughed at —

Monsieur de Pourceaugnac.

Assuredly not.

Sbrigani.

And whoso laughs at him must answer for his laughter to me.

Monsieur de Pourceaugnac, *to Sbrigani.*

Monsieur, I am infinitely obliged to you.

Sbrigani.

I am grieved, monsieur, to see a person like yourself received in such a way, and I ask your pardon for the town.

Monsieur de Pourceaugnac.

Monsieur, I thank you.

Sbrigani.

I saw you this morning, monsieur, when you breakfasted at the place where the coach put up; and the grace with which you ate your food gave birth to friendship in my mind at once; and — as I know that you have never visited these parts before — I am very glad to meet you, to offer my services and help to guide you among these people, who do not always show to worthy persons the respect they ought.

Monsieur de Pourceaugnac.

You do me too much kindness.

Sbrigani.

As I said before, the moment that I saw you I felt an inclination to you.

Monsieur de Pourceaugnac.

I am indeed obliged to you.

Sbrigani.

Your countenance has pleased me —

Monsieur de Pourceaugnac.

You honor me greatly.

Sbrigani.

It looks to me so honest —

Monsieur de Pourceaugnac.

Your most obedient.

Sbrigani.

There is something so amiable —

Monsieur de Pourceaugnac.

Ah!

Sbrigani.

So gracious —

Monsieur de Pourceaugnac.

Ah! ah!

Sbrigani.

Gentle —

Monsieur de Pourceaugnac.

Ah! ah!

Sbrigani.

Majestic —

Monsieur de Pourceaugnac.

Ah! ah!

Sbrigani.

Frank —

Monsieur de Pourceaugnac.

Ah! ah!

SBRIGANI.

And cordial.

MONSIEUR DE POURCEAUGNAC.

Ah! ah!

SBRIGANI.

I assure you I am wholly yours.

MONSIEUR DE POURCEAUGNAC.

For which I am greatly obliged.

SBRIGANI.

I speak from the bottom of my heart.

MONSIEUR DE POURCEAUGNAC.

I believe it.

SBRIGANI.

If I had the honor of being known to you you would be aware that I am a very sincere man.

MONSIEUR DE POURCEAUGNAC.

I do not doubt it.

SBRIGANI.

An enemy to deceit —

MONSIEUR DE POURCEAUGNAC.

I am persuaded of it.

Sbrigani.

Incapable of disguising my sentiments.

Monsieur de Pourceaugnac.

Yes, so I think.

Sbrigani.

I see you glancing at my coat, which is not like other people's. The reason is, I come from Naples, at your service, and I like to retain a little of the style of dress and the sincerity of my native land.

Monsieur de Pourceaugnac.

And very proper, too. For my part I have had this court-suit made for me at home.

Sbrigani.

Faith! it becomes you better than it would our courtiers.

Monsieur de Pourceaugnac.

That is what my tailor told me. The suit is neat and rich; 'twill make a talk here.

Sbrigani.

No doubt it will. You will go to the Louvre, of course?

Monsieur de Pourceaugnac.

I am bound to pay my duty at court.

SBRIGANI.

The King will be delighted to see you.

MONSIEUR DE POURCEAUGNAC.

Yes, so I think.

SBRIGANI.

Have you chosen a lodging?

MONSIEUR DE POURCEAUGNAC.

No, I am now in search of one.

SBRIGANI.

I shall be very glad to help you, for I know this whole region well.

SCENE SIXTH

ÉRASTE, MONSIEUR DE POURCEAUGNAC, SBRIGANI

ÉRASTE.

Ha! who is this? What! can it be? How fortunate this meeting! Monsieur de Pourceaugnac! I am truly delighted to see you — But how is this? You don't seem to recognize me.

MONSIEUR DE POURCEAUGNAC.

Your servant, monsieur.

Éraste.

Is it possible that five or six years can have wiped me from your memory? Do you not recognize the closest friend of the whole family of Pourceaugnac?

Monsieur de Pourceaugnac.

Pardon me, yes. (*Aside to Sbrigani*) Upon my word, I don't know who he is.

Éraste.

There's not a Pourceaugnac in all Limoges whom I don't know, from the smallest to the greatest; I was intimate with them all at the time I lived there, and I had the honor of seeing you almost daily.

Monsieur de Pourceaugnac.

The honor was mine, monsieur.

Éraste.

And yet you can't recall my face?

Monsieur de Pourceaugnac.

Indeed I do. (*Aside to Sbrigani*) Don't know him at all.

Éraste.

You don't remember that I had the honor, I can't tell how many times, to drink with you?

Monsieur de Pourceaugnac.

Oh! excuse me, yes. (*Aside to Sbrigani*) I don't know what he is talking about.

Éraste.

What is the name of that caterer in Limoges who serves such excellent food?

Monsieur de Pourceaugnac.

Petit-Jean.

Éraste.

Ah! to be sure. How often we went there you and I to enjoy it! That place in Limoges where people promenade — I forget what you call it?

Monsieur de Pourceaugnac.

The Cimetière des Arènes.

Éraste.

Just so. How many pleasant hours I have spent there, enjoying your agreeable conversation. You don't remember all that?

Monsieur de Pourceaugnac.

Excuse me, I remember it. (*Aside to Sbrigani*) The devil take me if I remember a thing about it.

Sbrigani, *aside to M. de Pourceaugnac.*

A hundred little matters like that are apt to escape our memories.

Éraste.

Embrace me, I entreat, and let us renew the ties of our former friendship.

Sbrigani, *to M. de Pourceaugnac.*

He is a man who seems truly attached to you.

Éraste.

Do tell me the news of all your relations. How is monsieur your — there! that most worthy man?

Monsieur de Pourceaugnac.

My brother, the consul?

Éraste.

Yes.

Monsieur de Pourceaugnac.

He is uncommonly well.

Éraste.

Delighted to hear it! And that good-natured fellow — there! your —

Monsieur de Pourceaugnac.

My cousin, the assessor?

Éraste.

Precisely.

Monsieur de Pourceaugnac.

He is always gay and lively.

Éraste.

Faith, I 'm glad of it. And your uncle?

Monsieur de Pourceaugnac.

I have no uncle.

Éraste.

But you had one in those days.

Monsieur de Pourceaugnac.

No, only an aunt.

Éraste.

Aunt, of course! that 's what I meant. How is she?

Monsieur de Pourceaugnac.

My aunt has been dead these six months.

Éraste.

Ah! poor woman; she was such a kind creature.

Monsieur de Pourceaugnac.

And we almost lost my nephew the canon; he came very near dying of the small-pox.

Éraste.

What a pity that would have been!

Monsieur de Pourceaugnac.

Did you know him?

Éraste.

Know him? of course I did; a tall, well-made fellow.

Monsieur de Pourceaugnac.

Not so very tall.

Éraste.

No, but well set-up.

Monsieur de Pourceaugnac.

Yes.

Éraste.

I mean your nephew.

Monsieur de Pourceaugnac.

Yes.

Éraste.

Son of your brother, or your sister.

Monsieur de Pourceaugnac.

Precisely.

Éraste.

Canon of the church of — what's its name?

Monsieur de Pourceaugnac.

Saint-Étienne.

Éraste.

Of course. I don't know any other.

Monsieur de Pourceaugnac, *aside to Sbrigani.*

He knows all my relations.

Sbrigani.

He knows you better than you think.

Monsieur de Pourceaugnac, *to Éraste.*

It seems you spent some time in Limoges?

Éraste.

Two whole years.

Monsieur de Pourceaugnac.

Were you there when my cousin, the deputy elect, made the governor of our town stand sponsor for his child?

Éraste.

Yes, indeed; I was among the first invited.

Monsieur de Pourceaugnac.

'T was a fine occasion.

Éraste.

Very fine, yes.

Monsieur de Pourceaugnac.

And the supper well-served.

Éraste.

Indeed you may say so.

Monsieur de Pourceaugnac.

You saw of course the quarrel that I had with that Perigord gentleman?

Éraste.

Yes.

Monsieur de Pourceaugnac.

Parbleu! he found his match.

Éraste.

Ha, ha!

Monsieur de Pourceaugnac.

He slapped my face, but I gave him a piece of my mind.

Éraste.

I remember. But now, I insist that you take up your lodging with me.

Monsieur de Pourceaugnac.

I could not think of —

Éraste.

You are jesting; I cannot allow my best friend to live elsewhere than in my house.

Monsieur de Pourceaugnac.

I fear I should —

Éraste.

No, no, not a word! indeed you must lodge with me.

Sbrigani, *to M. de Pourceaugnac.*

As he insists upon it, I should, if I were you, accept his offer.

Éraste.

Where is your baggage?

Monsieur de Pourceaugnac.

I left it with my valet where the coach set me down.

Éraste.

Then I will send for it.

Monsieur de Pourceaugnac.

No; I forbade my man to stir until I returned myself, for fear of trickery.

Sbrigani.

'T was prudent.

Monsieur de Pourceaugnac.

One must needs be cautious in these parts.

Éraste.

I see how wise you are in all things.

Sbrigani, *to Éraste.*

I will myself accompany monsieur, and bring him to your house, if you will kindly tell me where it is.

Éraste.

Do so. I shall be glad to give my orders. You have only to bring back monsieur to the house you see before you.

Sbrigani.

We shall return at once.

Éraste.

I 'll await you with impatience.

Monsieur de Pourceaugnac, *to Sbrigani.*

Here 's an acquaintance I did not expect.

Sbrigani.

He looks to me like an honest man.

Éraste, *alone.*

Ha! ha! Monsieur de Pourceaugnac! we 'll give it you on all sides. Our plans are laid; I have only to strike. Holà!

SCENE SEVENTH

ÉRASTE, AN APOTHECARY

ÉRASTE.

Monsieur, you are, I think, the doctor to whom I sent a message?

APOTHECARY.

No, monsieur, that honor does not belong to me. I am not the doctor; I am only an apothecary, an unworthy apothecary, at your service.

ÉRASTE.

And the doctor, is he at home?

APOTHECARY.

Yes; he is trying to get rid of certain patients. I will tell him you are here.

ÉRASTE.

No, don't stir; I will wait till he has finished. I have come to put into his charge a relation of ours — about whom some of us spoke to him; a man who has just been attacked with a species of insanity, of which we are anxious to get him cured before his marriage.

APOTHECARY.

I know what it is, I know what it is. I was with the doctor when some one spoke to him.

Faith! you could n't have called in a cleverer doctor. He 's a man who knows his medicine as I know my alphabet; and a patient might die before he 'd give up one iota of the rules. Yes, he follows the high-road, follows the high-road, and he does n't think it mid-day at fourteen o'clock. For all the gold in the universe he would n't cure a patient with any remedies but those the Faculty permit.

Éraste.

He is perfectly right; a patient should n't even wish to be cured unless the Faculty consent.

Apothecary.

It is not because he and I are such friends that I speak; but there 's pleasure in being his patient; I 'd rather die under his remedies than be cured by those of others. Don't you see, whatever happens, one has the comfort of knowing it is all in order, all in order, and if you die under his management your heirs can't blame you.

Éraste.

That 's a great consolation for the deceased.

Apothecary.

Indeed it is. It is a blessing to die by the right method at any rate. Besides which, he is

not one of those doctors who spin out maladies; he is expeditious, expeditious; he likes to get through with his patients, and if they have to die, he makes them do it as fast as they can.

Éraste.

Well, there 's nothing like doing things quickly.

Apothecary.

That is true. What 's the good of turning round and round the pot and haggling? It is best to know at once the short and the long of an illness.

Éraste.

You are right.

Apothecary.

He has done me the honor to attend three of my children and they died in four days; in the hands of any other physician they 'd have lingered four months.

Éraste.

It is a good thing to have friends like him.

Apothecary.

You may well say that. I have only two children left, and he cares for them as if they were his own. He prescribes for them just as

he fancies; I never interfere, I never interfere; and often, when I go home I find they have been bled or purged by his direction.

Éraste.

That's very obliging of him.

Apothecary.

Here he is, here he is, here he is now.

SCENE EIGHTH

Éraste, First Doctor, Apothecary, a Peasant, a Peasant-woman

Peasant, *to Doctor.*

Monsieur, he can't bear it; he says he feels in his head the most horrid pains in the world

Doctor.

The patient is a fool; and all the more because, in the disease he has, it is not his head, according to Galen, but his spleen which pains him.

Peasant.

Well, whatever it is, monsieur, he has had a looseness in the bowels, too, for the last six months.

DOCTOR.

Good; that is a sign that his inside works. I 'll call and see him in a day or two. But, in case he dies before then, don't fail to let me know; for it is not civil to let a doctor pay a visit to a dead man.

PEASANT-WOMAN, *to Doctor.*

My father, monsieur, gets worse and worse.

DOCTOR.

That 's not my fault. I give him remedies; why does n't he get well? How many times have you bled him?

PEASANT-WOMAN.

Fifteen, monsieur, in twenty days.

DOCTOR.

Bled him fifteen times, you say?

PEASANT-WOMAN.

Yes.

DOCTOR.

And he does not get well?

PEASANT-WOMAN.

No, monsieur.

Doctor.

'T is a sign that the disease is not in the blood. Now, then, we will purge him an equal number of times to see if it is not in the humors of the body; after which, if nothing succeeds, I shall send him to the baths.

Apothecary.

That 's the last resource, the last resource of medicine.

SCENE NINTH

Éraste, First Doctor, Apothecary

Éraste, *to Doctor.*

It was I, monsieur, who sent you word, a few days back, about a relative rather troubled in his mind, whom I desire to place in your house, in order to cure him more conveniently and let few people see him.

Doctor.

Yes, monsieur, yes; I have made my arrangements; and I promise you to take all imaginable care of him.

Éraste.

Here he comes now, most luckily.

Doctor.

His coming is opportune, for I have an honored friend and colleague with me now, whom I shall be most glad to consult about his malady.

SCENE TENTH

Monsieur de Pourceaugnac, Éraste, First Doctor, Apothecary

Éraste, *to Monsieur de Pourceaugnac.*

A little matter has occurred which obliges me to leave you for a time; but here (*motioning to the Doctor*) is a person in whose hands I place you; he will treat you, for me, to the best of his ability.

Doctor.

The duty of my profession obliges me to do so; and it is all-sufficient that you lay this charge upon me.

Monsieur de Pourceaugnac, *aside.*

His steward, no doubt; he must be a man of quality.

Doctor, *to Éraste.*

Yes, I assure you that I shall treat this gentleman by our venerable methods, and under all the regulations of our art.

Monsieur de Pourceaugnac.

No need for so much ceremony. I do not come here to put you to inconvenience.

Doctor.

An employment of this kind gives me nothing but pleasure.

Éraste, *to Doctor.*

Here are ten pistoles in advance, on account of what I promised you.

Monsieur de Pourceaugnac.

No, no, if you please; I cannot suffer you to be at any cost, or to purchase things for me.

Éraste.

I beg of you, say nothing more. That money is not for what you think.

Monsieur de Pourceaugnac.

I ask you to treat me as a friend.

Éraste.

That is exactly what I wish to do. (*Aside to the Doctor*) Above all, I warn you, let him not escape; he may try at times to do so.

Doctor.

Do not be anxious as to that.

Éraste, *to Monsieur de Pourceaugnac.*

I beg you to excuse my incivility in leaving you.

Monsieur de Pourceaugnac.

Make no excuses; you are too kind in what you do for me.

SCENE ELEVENTH

Monsieur de Pourceaugnac, First Doctor, Second Doctor, Apothecary

First Doctor, *to M. de Pourceaugnac.*

It is a great honor for me, monsieur, to be selected to attend upon you.

Monsieur de Pourceaugnac.

I am obliged to you.

First Doctor.

Here is a very able man, my colleague, with whom I shall consult as to the mode of treating you.

Monsieur de Pourceaugnac.

No ceremony, I tell you. I am a man who is content with ordinary living.

First Doctor.

Here! bring chairs.

(*Lacqueys enter, and place chairs.*)

Monsieur de Pourceaugnac, *aside.*

Those valets look rather lugubrious for the service of a young fellow like my host.

First Doctor, *to M. de Pourceaugnac.*

Come, monsieur, take your seat.

(*The two Doctors make M. de Pourceaugnac sit between them.*)

Monsieur de Pourceaugnac, *sitting down.*

Your most obedient. (*The Doctors each take a hand to feel his pulse.*) What does all this mean?

First Doctor.

Is your appetite good?

Monsieur de Pourceaugnac.

Yes, I eat well, and drink better.

First Doctor.

That's a pity. This craving for cold and humidity is an indication of heat and dryness within. Do you sleep sound?

Monsieur de Pourceaugnac.

Yes, if I sup well.

First Doctor.

Do you dream?

Monsieur de Pourceaugnac.

Sometimes.

First Doctor.

Of what nature are your dreams?

Monsieur de Pourceaugnac.

The nature of dreams! What the devil is this kind of talk?

First Doctor.

Your dejections, how are they?

Monsieur de Pourceaugnac.

Faith! I don't understand what your questions are about. I want something to drink.

First Doctor.

A little patience; we intend to discuss your case before you; and we shall do so in French, in order to be more intelligible.

Monsieur de Pourceaugnac.

Pray what discussion is there about getting a bit to eat?

First Doctor, *to Second Doctor.*

Inasmuch as no malady can be cured unless we know it perfectly, and as it cannot be perfectly known without establishing its particular principle and true species from its diagnostic and prognostic signs, you will permit me, my honored elder and colleague, to enter into consideration of the malady itself here presented to us, before touching on the question of therapeutics and the remedies we may decide to employ for the perfect eradication of the same. I say therefore, monsieur, with your permission, that our patient here present is unfortunately attacked, affected, possessed, and pervaded by the sort of madness which we call, very properly, hypochondriacal melancholy; a species of very distressing madness, which demands an Æsculapius like yourself, consummate in our art,— you, I repeat, who have whitened, as the saying is, in harness; and through whose hands so many patients of all kinds have passed. I call this form of madness hypochondriacal melancholy to distinguish it from two others; for the celebrated Galen has learnedly established three species of this malady, which we call melancholy; and it is so called not only by the Latins but

by the Greeks, — a fact it is well to remark for our guidance in the present case. The first of these species proceeds from the vitiated condition of the brain itself; the second from the blood, turning and becoming atrabiliary; the third, called hypochondriacal, — namely, the one we are now considering, — proceeds from the vitiated condition of the abdomen and lower intestines, more particularly the spleen, the heat and inflammation of which send to the brain of a patient much thick and unctuous fuliginous matter, the black, malignant vapors of which produce disorder in the functions of the intellectual faculties and the malady, from which, according to our judgment, this patient is manifestly suffering. As the incontestable diagnostics of what I have now said to you, you have only to consider that solemn air which you behold; that sadness, accompanied by fear and distrust, pathognomical and individual signs of this disease (so well defined by that divine old man, Hippocrates); that countenance; those red and haggard eyes; that heavy beard; that carriage of the body, which is lank, puny, black, and hairy; all signs which denote the patient as being afflicted with this malady, proceeding from the virus of hypochondriasis; which

malady, becoming, by lapse of time, naturalized, inveterate, customary, and in possession of him, will soon degenerate either into monomania, or into phthisis, or into apoplexy, or even, in the end, into fury and frenzy. All this being thus diagnosed, — for a disease well-recognized is half cured, *ignoti nulla est curatio morbi*, — it will not be difficult for you to agree with me as to the remedies we must now apply, as follows: Primarily, to remedy the obturating plethora and the superabundant cacochymy of the body, I am of opinion that he be liberally phlebotomized; that is to say, that the bleedings be frequent and copious; first from the basilic vein inside the arm; next from the cephalic vein deriving from the brain; and even, if the disease proves obstinate, I would open the forehead vein, and make the opening large, in order to let the thick blood out; while at the same time, I should purge, deobstruct, and evacuate him by proper and suitable cathartics: that is to say, by cholagogues, melangogues, *et cætera;* and, as the true source of all the trouble is a feculent and fatty humor, or a black and unctuous vapor which darkens, infects, and corrupts the animal spirits, it is proper that he should take a bath of clear pure water, with

repeated doses of whey; the water to purify the feculence of the turgid humor, the whey to dissipate the blackness of the vapor. But, above all things, I consider it necessary to enliven him with agreeable conversation, songs, and instruments of music; to which may be added dancers, in order that their lively motions, contortions, and agility may excite and awaken his sluggish and torpid wits, occasioned by the thickness of his blood, in which lies the seat of his malady. Those are the remedies that I imagine; to which may be added many others far better by my respected master and elder colleague, according to the experience, light, and practice he has obtained in our art. *Dixi.*

Second Doctor.

God forbid, monsieur, that the thought should come into my mind to add one iota to what you have said! You have so fully discoursed upon the signs, symptoms, and causes of monsieur's malady, the argument you have made thereon is so learned and so fine, that it is impossible he should not be mad and hypochondriacally melancholy; and even if he were not so now he must infallibly become so from the excellence of the things you have stated and the justice of the

reasons which you give. Yes, monsieur, you have depicted most graphically, *graphice depinxisti*, all that appertains to that malady. Nothing could be more learnedly, wisely, ingeniously conceived, thought, imagined, than what you have enunciated on the subject of this disease, whether on its diagnosis, prognosis, or therapeutics; and nought remains for me to do, but to congratulate monsieur on having fallen into your hands, and to say to him that he is most fortunate in being mad, and so experiencing the efficacy and comfort of the remedies you have so judiciously proposed. I approve them all: *manibus et pedibus descendo in tuam sententiam.* All that I shall venture to add is, that the bleedings and purgings be done by the uneven numbers, *numero deus impare gaudet ;* the whey administered before the bath; a plaster applied to his forehead composed of salt, salt being the symbol of wisdom; the walls of his room whitewashed to dissipate the blackness of his spirits, *album est disgregativum visus ;* and finally that he be given at once a slight injection to serve as a prelude and introduction of your judicious remedies, from which, if he is able to recover, he will find relief. Heaven grant that these remedies, which are yours, monsieur, may

benefit the patient in accordance with our intention.

Monsieur de Pourceaugnac.

Messieurs, I have listened to you for the last hour. Are you playing a comedy?

First Doctor.

No, monsieur, this is no play.

Monsieur de Pourceaugnac.

Then what are you talking about? What are you trying to say with all that gabble and silliness?

First Doctor.

Of course; insulting language! — that is a diagnostic which affords us confirmation of the disease; in fact, it may already be turning into mania.

Monsieur de Pourceaugnac, *aside.*

With whom can that man have left me? (*Spits once or twice.*)

First Doctor.

Ah! another diagnostic; frequent sputation.

Monsieur de Pourceaugnac.

Come, stop all this; let us go out.

First Doctor.

Another still; desire for change of place.

Monsieur de Pourceaugnac.

What does all this mean? What do you want with me?

First Doctor.

We want to cure you, according to the orders which have been given to us.

Monsieur de Pourceaugnac.

Cure me?

First Doctor.

Yes.

Monsieur de Pourceaugnac.

Parbleu! I 'm not ill.

First Doctor.

Bad sign, when a patient does not know he is ill.

Monsieur de Pourceaugnac.

I tell you I am perfectly well.

First Doctor.

We know better than you how you are; we are doctors who can see clearly into your constitution.

MONSIEUR DE POURCEAUGNAC.

If you are doctors I shall have nothing to do with you; I scorn your medicine.

FIRST DOCTOR.

Hum! hum! here is a man who is madder than we thought.

MONSIEUR DE POURCEAUGNAC.

Monsieur, my father and my mother never took remedies, and both of them died without the help of doctors.

FIRST DOCTOR.

Then I am not surprised they begat a son who becomes insane. (*To the Second Doctor*) Come, we will now proceed to effect the cure, and, by the exhilarating sweetness of harmony, let us soften, lenify, and compose the irritation of his spirits, which are ready, I perceive, to be incensed.

SCENE TWELFTH

MONSIEUR DE POURCEAUGNAC, *alone.*

What the devil is all this? Are the people of these parts crazy? I never saw anything like it in my life; I can't understand a word of it.

SCENE THIRTEENTH

Monsieur de Pourceaugnac, two Doctors, *grotesquely attired. At first they all three sit down; then the doctors rise at intervals, and bow to Monsieur de Pourceaugnac, who rises each time and returns their bow*

The two Doctors, *together.*

Buon dì, buon dì, buon dì,
Non vi lasciate uccidere
Dal dolor malinconico,
Noi vi faremo ridere
Col nostro canto harmonico;
Sol per guarirvi
Siamo venuti quì.
Buon dì, buon dì, buon dì.

First Doctor.

Altro non è la pazzia
Che malinconia.
Il malato
Non è disperato,
Se vol pigliar un poco d'allegria,
Altro non è la pazzia
Che malinconia.

Second Doctor.

Sù, cantate, ballate, ridete;
E, ce far meglio volete,
Quando sentite il deliro vicino.
Pigliato del vino,
E qualche volta un poco di tabac,
Allegramente, Monsu Pourceaugnac.

SCENE FOURTEENTH

Monsieur de Pourceaugnac, the two grotesque Doctors, two Clowns *dancing the ballet*

SCENE FIFTEENTH

Monsieur de Pourceaugnac, an Apothecary, *holding a syringe*

Apothecary.

Here, monsieur, is a little remedy, a little remedy, which you must take, if you please, if you please.

Monsieur de Pourceaugnac.

Nonsense; what do I want with that?

Apothecary.

It has been ordered for you, monsieur, it has been ordered.

Monsieur de Pourceaugnac.

Ho! what 's all this fuss?

Apothecary.

Take it, monsieur, take it; it won't do you any harm, any harm, any harm.

Monsieur de Pourceaugnac.

Yah!

APOTHECARY.

Only a little enema, little enema, emollient, emollient; a little injection; there, monsieur, take it, take it; it is only to cleanse you out, cleanse you out, cleanse you out.

SCENE SIXTEENTH

MONSIEUR DE POURCEAUGNAC, AN APOTHECARY, TWO GROTESQUE DOCTORS, TWO CLOWNS, *all with syringes*

THE TWO DOCTORS.

Piglialo sù,
Signor monsu,
Piglialo, piglialo, piglialo sù,
Che non ti farà male.
Piglialo sù questo serviziale;
Piglialo sù,
Signor monsu,
Piglialo, piglialo, piglialo sù.

MONSIEUR DE POURCEAUGNAC.

Go to the devil!

Monsieur de Pourceaugnac, putting on his hat to protect himself from the syringes, is followed by the Doctors and the Clowns. He

runs out behind the scenes and returns on the other side to his chair, where he finds the Apothecary awaiting him; the Doctors and the Clowns return also.

The two Doctors.

Piglialo sù
Signor monsu;
Piglialo, piglialo, piglialo sù,
Che non ti farà male.
Piglialo sù questo serviziale;
Piglialo sù,
Signor monsu,
Piglialo, piglialo, piglialo sù.

Monsieur de Pourceaugnac picks up his chair to protect himself, and rushes away with it; the Apothecary squirts his syringe on the chair; the Doctors and the Clowns pursue Monsieur de Pourceaugnac.

END OF FIRST ACT.

Act Second

SCENE FIRST

First Doctor, Sbrigani

First Doctor.

HE forced all obstacles I had placed in his way, and escaped the remedies I was beginning to apply.

Sbrigani.

He is an enemy to himself if he flies from remedies as salutary as yours.

First Doctor.

Sign of a disordered brain and vitiated intellect to refuse to be cured.

Sbrigani.

You, with your knowledge, would have cured him out of hand.

First Doctor.

Of course I should, if there had even been a complication of a dozen maladies.

Sbrigani.

Well, there 's fifty well-earned pistoles which he makes you lose.

First Doctor.

Lose! not I; I don't intend to lose them; I mean to cure him whether he will or no. He is bound and pledged to take my remedies; and I shall seize him wherever I find him as a deserter from the Faculty and a violater of my prescriptions.

Sbrigani.

You are right. Your remedies were sure; and he has robbed you of that money.

First Doctor.

Where can I get news of him?

Sbrigani.

At Oronte's house, no doubt. He has come to Paris to marry the daughter, and the father, not knowing of his malady, is in haste, they say, to conclude the marriage.

First Doctor.

I 'll go there at once and speak to him.

Sbrigani.

Not a bad thing to do.

First Doctor.

He was delivered to my care; no patient can be suffered to scorn his doctor.

Sbrigani.

Well said, and, if you 'll take my advice, you must not allow him to be married until you have tried all your remedies to your heart's content.

First Doctor.

Let me alone for that !

Sbrigani, *aside and departing.*

And I, on my side, will bring up another battery ; the father can be as easily befooled as the son-in-law.

—•—

SCENE SECOND

Oronte, First Doctor

First Doctor.

Monsieur, you have, I believe, a certain Monsieur de Pourceaugnac, who is to marry your daughter ?

Oronte.

Yes ; I expect him here to-day ; he will soon arrive.

First Doctor.

He has arrived. Being placed in my house by his friends, he has just escaped, and I forbid

you, on behalf of the Faculty of Medicine, to proceed to the marriage arranged for him until I have duly prepared him for it and put him in a condition to procreate children of a proper condition of body and mind.

Oronte.

What does all this mean?

First Doctor.

Your proposed son-in law has been constituted my patient; his malady, which was given to me to cure, is an article that belongs to me; I reckon it as my property; and I hereby declare to you that I shall not allow him to marry until he has satisfied the laws of medicine and submitted himself duly to the remedies I prescribe.

Oronte.

Has he a disease?

First Doctor.

Yes.

Oronte.

And what disease, if you please?

First Doctor.

You need not be anxious.

Oronte.

Is it —

First Doctor.

Our profession compels us to secrecy. It is enough that I order both you and your daughter not to celebrate this marriage without my consent, under pain of incurring the wrath of the Faculty and of being attacked by all the maladies we control.

Oronte.

I do not desire, if such be the case, to press the marriage.

First Doctor.

He was placed in my hands, and he is bound to remain my patient.

Oronte.

Very good.

First Doctor.

In vain he may try to escape; I shall have him arrested and sentenced to be cured by me.

Oronte.

I consent to that.

First Doctor.

Yes, he must either die, or I must cure him.

ORONTE.

I am willing.

FIRST DOCTOR.

And if I do not find him, I shall make you responsible, and take you to cure in place of him.

ORONTE.

But I am well!

FIRST DOCTOR.

No matter for that; I must have my patient, and I shall take him where I can get him.

ORONTE.

You can take whom you like, but it will not be me. (*Alone*) What sort of reasoning is that, I 'd like to know.

SCENE THIRD

ORONTE, SBRIGANI, *dressed as a Flemish merchant*

SBRIGANI.

Monsieur, with your permission, I am a foreign merchant, Flemish, who would like to ask you a little something.

ORONTE.

What is it, monsieur?

Sbrigani.

Monsieur, put on your hat, I beg.

Oronte.

Tell me, monsieur, what you wish to know.

Sbrigani.

Not a word more can I say, monsieur, until you put your hat upon your head.

Oronte.

So be it. Now, monsieur, what have you to ask me?

Sbrigani.

Do you know in this town a certain Monsieur Oronte?

Oronte.

Yes, I know him.

Sbrigani.

What sort of man is he, if you please, monsieur?

Oronte.

A man like any other.

Sbrigani.

Can you tell me, monsieur, if he is rich, and has property?

Oronte.

Yes.

SBRIGANI.

Very rich, monsieur?

ORONTE.

Yes.

SBRIGANI.

I am glad of that.

ORONTE.

Why so?

SBRIGANI.

For a little reason of some consequence to us, monsieur.

ORONTE.

But why, I ask you.

SBRIGANI.

Because, monsieur, we are told this Monsieur Oronte gives his daughter in marriage to a certain Monsieur de Pourceaugnac —

ORONTE.

Well?

SBRIGANI.

And this Monsieur de Pourceaugnac is a man who owes large sums of money to several Flemish merchants who come to Paris, like me.

ORONTE.

Monsieur de Pourceaugnac owes money to several Flemish merchants?

Sbrigani.

Yes, monsieur; and for the last eight months we have had a little writ against him; but he puts off paying us until this marriage, when Monsieur Oronte will give something to his daughter.

Oronte.

Hum! hum! puts off his creditors for that, does he?

Sbrigani.

Yes, monsieur; and therefore we are hoping for this marriage fervently.

Oronte, *aside.*

The warning is not amiss. (*Aloud*) I bid you good-day.

Sbrigani.

I thank you, monsieur, for this great favor —

Oronte.

Your most obedient.

Sbrigani.

I am greatly obliged for the good news you have given me. (*Alone, after taking off his beard and Flemish coat which he had put on over his own*) That's not a bad beginning! Away with these Flemish feathers, and let me

think of our other machinations. I 'll sow suspicions now to set the son-in-law against the marriage; they are both such fools they 'll swallow any fly we bait them with. To first-class rogues like us 't is mere child's-play when we find the game as easy to bag as this.

SCENE FOURTH

Monsieur de Pourceaugnac, Sbrigani

Monsieur de Pourceaugnac, *thinking himself alone.*

Piglialo sù, piglialo sù, signor monsu. What the devil does that mean? (*Sees Sbrigani.*) Ha! hi!

Sbrigani.

What is it, monsieur? is anything the matter?

Monsieur de Pourceaugnac.

I mistook; I see injections everywhere.

Sbrigani.

What?

Monsieur de Pourceaugnac.

Ah! you don't know what happened in that house after you left me.

Sbrigani.

No, indeed; what was it?

Monsieur de Pourceaugnac.

I expected to be regaled as a visitor should be.

Sbrigani.

Yes.

Monsieur de Pourceaugnac.

Leave you in the hands of monsieur. Doctors, dressed in black! Felt my pulse. He 's mad. Two fat cheeks. Big hats. Buon dì, buon dì! Six clowns. Ta, ra, ta, ta; ta, ra, ta, ta. Allegramente, Monsu Pourceaugnac. Apothecary. Injections. Take it, monsieur, take it, take it. It is healing, monsieur, healing. 'T is to cleanse, cleanse, cleanse. Never, in all my days, was I so glutted with folly!

Sbrigani.

What does all this mean?

Monsieur de Pourceaugnac.

It means that that man, with his fine embracings, is a rogue, who put me in that house to play a prank upon me and make game of me.

Sbrigani.

Dear! dear! how deceitful faces are. I thought him the most affectionate of friends. It

is one of my amazements how rogues like that should be in this world.

Monsieur de Pourceaugnac.

Don't I smell of their injections? Just see, if you please.

Sbrigani.

I do perceive a little something that seems like it.

Monsieur de Pourceaugnac.

My nose and my imagination are full of it. I fancy I see a dozen syringes taking aim at me.

Sbrigani.

It was an outrage; men are traitors and scoundrels indeed!

Monsieur de Pourceaugnac.

Show me the way, I beg you, to the house of Monsieur Oronte. I shall be thankful to go there at once.

Sbrigani.

Ha, ha! I see you have an amorous disposition; you must have heard that Monsieur Oronte has a daughter.

Monsieur de Pourceaugnac.

Yes, I am here to espouse her.

Sbrigani.

To — es — pouse her?

Monsieur de Pourceaugnac.

Yes.

Sbrigani.

In marriage?

Monsieur de Pourceaugnac.

How else, I 'd like to know?

Sbrigani.

Ah! that 's another thing, and I beg your pardon heartily.

Monsieur de Pourceaugnac.

Why so? What does this mean?

Sbrigani.

Oh, nothing.

Monsieur de Pourceaugnac.

It must mean something.

Sbrigani.

Nothing, I tell you. I spoke too quick.

Monsieur de Pourceaugnac.

I beg you to tell me at once what is under all this.

Sbrigani.

No, it is not necessary.

MONSIEUR DE POURCEAUGNAC.

I entreat —

SBRIGANI.

No, no; I ask you to excuse me.

MONSIEUR DE POURCEAUGNAC.

Are you not friendly to me?

SBRIGANI.

Indeed I am; no one could be more so.

MONSIEUR DE POURCEAUGNAC.

Then you ought to hide nothing from me.

SBRIGANI.

It is something that may injure my neighbor.

MONSIEUR DE POURCEAUGNAC.

To induce you to open your mind, here is a little ring which I ask you to keep for love of me.

SBRIGANI.

Let me reflect a moment on what I ought to do. (*Turns slightly aside, apparently in thought, and speaks as if to himself.*) Monsieur Oronte is certainly a man who seeks his own benefit, and who wants to provide for his daughter as advantageously as he can, no matter if it injures others. These are things that everybody knows; but I am asked to tell them

to a stranger who does not know them, and we are forbidden to slander our neighbor. Yes, all that 's true; but, on the other hand, here is a stranger whom they are trying to impose upon; and who, in good faith, has come here to marry a girl he does not know and has never seen, — a frank and honest gentleman, for whom I feel an inclination, who does me the honor to consider me his friend, who places confidence in me, and gives me a ring to keep for his sake. (*Turns back and addresses Monsieur de Pourceaugnac.*) Yes, monsieur, I think I can tell you without hurting my conscience; but I shall strive to tell it as gently as possible. To say that the girl in question leads a depraved life would be rather too strong; in order to explain myself I must seek milder terms. Still, the word "gallantry" is hardly enough. "Coquette," a finished coquette, seems appropriate to my purpose, and I therefore use it to tell you honestly what she is.

Monsieur de Pourceaugnac.

They meant to dupe me!

Sbrigani.

Possibly, at bottom, there is not so much harm in her as people say. Besides, some men

hold themselves superior to such things and do not think their honor depends on what their wife may be.

MONSIEUR DE POURCEAUGNAC.

I beg your pardon; I, at least, shall never put a hat of that kind on my head. *We* choose to carry our heads high in the Pourceaugnac family.

SBRIGANI.

Here comes Monsieur Oronte.

MONSIEUR DE POURCEAUGNAC.

What, that old man?

SBRIGANI.

Yes. I retire.

SCENE FIFTH

ORONTE, MONSIEUR DE POURCEAUGNAC

MONSIEUR DE POURCEAUGNAC.

Good day, monsieur, good-day.

ORONTE.

Your servant, monsieur, your servant.

MONSIEUR DE POURCEAUGNAC.

You are Monsieur Oronte, are you not?

Oronte.

Yes.

Monsieur de Pourceaugnac.

And I am Monsieur de Pourceaugnac.

Oronte.

Ah! very good.

Monsieur de Pourceaugnac.

Do you think, Monsieur Oronte, that all men from Limoges are fools?

Oronte.

Do you think, Monsieur de Pourceaugnac, that Parisians are dolts?

Monsieur de Pourceaugnac.

Do you imagine, Monsieur Oronte, that a man like me is eager for a wife?

Oronte.

Do you suppose, Monsieur de Pourceaugnac, that a girl like my daughter is eager for a husband?

SCENE SIXTH

JULIE, ORONTE, MONSIEUR DE POURCEAUGNAC

JULIE.

They have just told me, father, that Monsieur de Pourceaugnac has arrived — Ah! here he is, no doubt; my heart informs me. How well-made he is! what style! how happy I shall be with such a husband! Will you permit me to embrace him and so testify —

ORONTE.

Gently, my daughter, gently.

MONSIEUR DE POURCEAUGNAC, *aside.*

Tudieu! what freedom! Ha! she has taken fire at once.

ORONTE.

I wish to know, Monsieur de Pourceaugnac why you venture to come —

JULIE, *approaching M. de Pourceaugnac, looks at him in a languishing manner and tries to take his hand.*

How glad I am to see you. I am most impatient to —

ORONTE.

My daughter, go away directly, I tell you.

MONSIEUR DE POURCEAUGNAC, *aside.*

Ho, ho! the bold wench!

ORONTE.

I should like to know, I say, for what reason, if you please, you have had the hardihood to —

Julie continues the same play.

MONSIEUR DE POURCEAUGNAC, *aside.*

Virtue of my life!

ORONTE, *to Julie.*

Again! What do you mean by such behavior?

JULIE.

Do you not wish me to caress the husband you have chosen for me?

ORONTE.

No; return to your room.

JULIE.

May I not look at him?

ORONTE.

Go in, I say.

JULIE.

But if you please, I 'd rather stay.

ORONTE.

I do not choose that you shall do so; if you do not go at once, I 'll —

JULIE.

Well, then, I 'll go.

ORONTE, *to M. de Pourceaugnac.*

My daughter is a silly girl who does not know the world.

MONSIEUR DE POURCEAUGNAC, *aside.*

I seem to please her.

ORONTE, *to Julie, who still lingers after making a few steps away.*

Do you not mean to go?

JULIE.

When do you mean to marry me to monsieur?

ORONTE.

Never; you are not for him.

JULIE.

But I wish to have him; you promised me I should.

ORONTE.

Well, if I promised it, I now unpromise it.

Monsieur de Pourceaugnac, *aside.*

She wishes to hold on to me!

Julie.

You can say what you like, but we shall marry certainly, in spite of all the world.

Oronte.

I shall prevent you both from doing so; you may be sure of that — Heavens! what vertigo has seized her?

SCENE SEVENTH

Oronte, Monsieur de Pourceaugnac

Monsieur de Pourceaugnac.

Ha! my intended father-in-law, do not excite yourself in that way. I have no desire to carry off your daughter, and your grimaces and pretences can't take *me* in.

Oronte.

Yours will not serve your purpose.

Monsieur de Pourceaugnac.

Have you taken into your head that Léonard de Pourceaugnac is a man to buy a pig in a poke?

Do you suppose he has not enough judgment to behave sensibly and inquire from others whether, in marrying, his honor has security?

ORONTE.

I don't know what that means. But how came *you* to take into your head that a father who is sixty-three years old can have so weak a brain and think so little of his daughter as to marry her to a man who has — you know what? a man who was placed in a doctor's house to be cured of it.

MONSIEUR DE POURCEAUGNAC.

That was only a trick they played upon me. I have no malady at all.

ORONTE.

But the doctor himself tells me you have.

MONSIEUR DE POURCEAUGNAC.

Then the doctor lied. I am a gentleman of rank, and I 'll maintain my credit sword in hand.

ORONTE.

I know very well what to believe of that. You can't deceive me about it, any more than about the debts you have pledged yourself to pay after marrying my daughter.

Monsieur de Pourceaugnac.

What debts?

Oronte.

Your pretended ignorance is useless. I have seen the Flemish merchant who, with other creditors, obtained a judgment against you over eight months ago.

Monsieur de Pourceaugnac.

What Flemish merchant? What creditors? What judgment obtained against me?

Oronte.

You know very well what I mean.

SCENE EIGHTH

Monsieur de Pourceaugnac, Oronte, Lucette

Lucette, *imitating the accent of a Languedocian, and addressing M. de Pourceaugnac.*

Ha! you are here! At last, after hunting everywhere, hither and thither, I have found you. How can you, villain, how can you bear to face me?

Monsieur de Pourceaugnac.

What does the woman mean?

LUCETTE.

What do I mean, you wretch! Do you dare pretend you do not know me? Do you not blush, infamous man, blush, I say, to see me? (*To Oronte*) I don't know if it is you, monsieur, whose daughter he wants to marry, but I tell you I'm his wife. It is now seven years since, passing through Pézénas, he had the art by his cajolings, which he well knows how to use, to win my heart and so oblige me, by that means, to marry him.

ORONTE.

Oh, oh!

MONSIEUR DE POURCEAUGNAC.

What the devil is all this?

LUCETTE.

After three years of married life the traitor left me on pretence that business called him home; and since that time I never heard one word of him till lately, when news was brought me that he was coming up to Paris to marry another girl, whose parents, knowing nothing of his marriage with me, had promised her to him. So, instantly I left my home and have hurried here as quickly as I could, in order to prevent

this criminal marriage, and to confound that worthless man before the eyes of every one.

Monsieur de Pourceaugnac.

The brazen creature!

Lucette.

Insolent man! are you not ashamed to abuse me when you ought to be humbled and confounded by the reproaches of your conscience?

Monsieur de Pourceaugnac.

I, — I, your husband?

Lucette.

Wretch, do you dare deny it? Ah! you know well, alas, to my sorrow! that what I say is true. Would to Heaven it were not! If you had left me to the innocence and peace in which I lived before your charms and flatteries led me unhappily astray, I should not now be the sad being that I am, — a woman who sees a cruel husband despise the ardor she has felt for him, and show no pity for the mortal grief his treacherous actions cause her.

Oronte.

I can scarce prevent myself from weeping. (*To M. de Pourceaugnac*) You are a bad, a wicked man.

Monsieur de Pourceaugnac.

I don't know anything about all this.

SCENE NINTH

Nérine, Lucette, Monsieur de Pourceaugnac, Oronte

Nérine, *counterfeiting a woman from Picardy.*

I can't go farther; I am all tired out. Ha! you swaggerer, what a dance you 've led me! But you can't escape me now. Justice, I claim justice! I 'll hinder this wicked marriage. (*To Oronte*) This is my husband, monsieur; and I want to have him hanged, the gallows bird!

Monsieur de Pourceaugnac.

Another!

Oronte.

What devil of a man is this?

Lucette, *to Nérine.*

What 's that you say of hindering and hanging? You have no call to talk in that way; he 's not your husband.

Nérine.

Madame, I am his wife.

LUCETTE.

That 's false; I am his wife, and if he is hanged, 't is I who ought to hang him.

NÉRINE.

I do not understand this woman's jargon.

LUCETTE.

I tell you I 'm his wife.

NÉRINE.

His wife?

LUCETTE.

Yes.

NÉRINE.

No! I, I, I — once more I say it, 't is I who am his wife.

LUCETTE.

I tell you, it is I.

NÉRINE.

Four years ago he married me.

LUCETTE.

Seven years ago he made me his wedded wife.

NÉRINE.

I can bring witnesses to prove my words.

LUCETTE.

My neighbors know it.

Nérine.

My town can swear to it.

Lucette.

All Pézénas was at our marriage.

Nérine.

All Saint-Quentin was invited to the wedding.

Lucette.

'T is true as gospel.

Nérine.

Nothing can be more certain.

Lucette, *to Monsieur de Pourceaugnac.*

Dare you say to the contrary, you villain?

Nérine, *to Monsieur de Pourceaugnac.*

Will you give me the lie, you wicked man?

Monsieur de Pourceaugnac.

The one is as true as the other.

Lucette.

What audacity! Miserable man, have you forgotten little Françoise and poor Jean, the fruits of our marriage?

Nérine.

Heavens! what insolence! Don't you remember that poor baby, my little Madeleine, whom you left me as a pledge of your love?

Monsieur de Pourceaugnac.

Two impudent sluts!

Lucette, *calling outside.*

Here, Françoise, here, Jean! come both of you and show your unnatural father what a brute he is.

Nérine, *calling outside.*

Come Madeleine, my child, come here, and shame your father for his heartlessness.

SCENE TENTH

Monsieur de Pourceaugnac, Oronte, Lucette, Nérine, and several Children

The Children.

Ah, papa! papa! papa!

Monsieur de Pourceaugnac.

The devil take those brats of strumpets!

Lucette.

Traitor! are you not ashamed to receive your children thus and shut your eyes to filial love?

Ha! you shall not escape me; I 'll follow you where'er you go, and charge you with your crime till I 'm avenged and you are hanged! Yes, you villain! I 'll have you hanged!

Nérine.

Do you not blush to say such words of me, and to care nothing for the smiles of this poor infant? You can't escape my claims. In spite of your denials, I 'll let the world know I 'm your wife, and you shall hang for this.

The Children.

Oh, papa! papa! papa!

Monsieur de Pourceaugnac.

Help! help! Where can I fly? Oh, I can bear no more!

Oronte.

Yes, you are right to punish him; and I say, too, he ought to be hanged.

SCENE ELEVENTH

Sbrigani, *alone.*

I keep an eye on all our plots and marshal them. They are doing well; we shall soon tire out our country fool, and, faith! he 'll skip.

SCENE TWELFTH

Monsieur de Pourceaugnac, Sbrigani

Monsieur de Pourceaugnac.

Ah! I 'm done for, crushed! What trouble! What a town! Attacked from all directions!

Sbrigani.

What is it, monsieur? Have worse things happened?

Monsieur de Pourceaugnac.

Yes; it rains women and injections too.

Sbrigani.

How so?

Monsieur de Pourceaugnac.

Two wanton jades accuse me of having married both of them, and threaten me with the law.

Sbrigani.

Ah! that 's bad indeed; for the law in these parts is so devilish rigorous against those special crimes.

Monsieur de Pourceaugnac.

Yes; but suppose they get indictment, summons, writ, and judgment by default and contumacy, I have still the " conflict of jurisdiction "

by which to gain delay and give me time to show the flaws in their procedure.

Sbrigani.

You talk in legal terms; 't is plain, my friend, you are of that profession.

Monsieur de Pourceaugnac.

I? not at all. I am a nobleman.

Sbrigani.

But in order to speak in such a way you must have studied law.

Monsieur de Pourceaugnac.

Never. 'T is only common-sense that tells me I shall be allowed to show my justifying facts; no man can be condemned on a simple accusation, without examination or confronting with accusers.

Sbrigani.

Ha! shrewder still!

Monsieur de Pourceaugnac.

Those words have come into my mind without my having legal knowledge.

Sbrigani.

A noble's common-sense may tell him, if you please, the aim of law, but it will never teach him legal jargon.

Monsieur de Pourceaugnac.

Those are terms I have picked up in reading novels.

Sbrigani.

Ha, ha! that 's good.

Monsieur de Pourceaugnac.

And to show you that I know nothing about the law, I request you to take me to a lawyer, in order to consult him on this affair.

Sbrigani.

Willingly; and I 'll take you at once to two most able men. But, first, I must warn you not to be surprised by their manner of talking. They have acquired at the bar a certain habit of declamation, so that now they chant what they have to say. I tell you this, else you might take for music what they tell you.

Monsieur de Pourceaugnac.

What does it matter how they say it, provided they tell me what I want to know?

SCENE THIRTEENTH

Monsieur de Pourceaugnac, Sbrigani, two Barristers, two Attorneys, two Sergeants

First Barrister, *dragging his words as he sings.*

Po — ly — ga — my
Is — cri — ime, a hang — ing,
Hang — ing cri — ime.

Second Barrister, *singing fast and high.*

Your case is fixed
As clear as day;
The law says plain,
Upon that crime,
It is a hanging matter.
If you consult our legal authors,
Legislators and glossators,
Justinian, Papinian,
Ulpian and Tribonian,
Fernand, Rebuffe, Jean Imole,
Paul, Castio, Julian, Barthole,
Jason, Alcias, and Cujas,
(That great wise man)
Polygamy and bigamy
Are hanging crimes.

Entrance of the Ballet

Dance of the two Attorneys and the two Sergeants while the Second Barrister sings as follows: —

Second Barrister, *singing.*

All civilized Peoples
Of decent sense
French, English, Dutch,
Danish, Swedish, Polish,
Portuguese, Spaniards, Flemings,
Italians, Germans,
On this subject have the same law;
The case is one we don't discuss;
Bigamy, Polygamy,
Are hanging matters.

First Barrister, *singing.*

Big — a — my, Po — ly — ga — my
Are hang — ing mat — ters.

Monsieur de Pourceaugnac frantically drives them off.

END OF SECOND ACT.

Act Third

SCENE FIRST

ÉRASTE, SBRIGANI

SBRIGANI.

YES, things are going the way we wish; and as his intellects are mighty small, and his sense the most limited in all the world, I have put into his mind so great a scare at the severity of the law and the arrangements already making for his death that he is now determined to escape. To conceal himself the better from the police, who, I have told him, are watching for him at the gates, he has resolved to disguise himself; and the disguise he has chosen is a woman's clothes!

ÉRASTE.

I 'd like to see him in that rig!

SBRIGANI.

You 'd better be thinking of your part and how to end the comedy. While I am playing my scenes with him, do you be off and — (*Whispers in Éraste's ear.*) Do you understand?

ÉRASTE.

Yes, yes.

SBRIGANI.

And when I have put him where I wish — (*Whispers again.*)

ÉRASTE.

Good, very good.

SBRIGANI.

And after I have warned the father — (*Whispers again.*)

ÉRASTE.

Capital; nothing could be better.

SBRIGANI.

Here comes our damsel — Quick, be off! don't let him see you with me.

SCENE SECOND

MONSIEUR DE POURCEAUGNAC, *disguised as a woman*, SBRIGANI

SBRIGANI.

For my part, I do not think that any one will recognize you in those clothes; you have all the air of a woman of quality.

MONSIEUR DE POURCEAUGNAC.

What surprises me is that in this town the forms of law are not observed.

SBRIGANI.

Yes, just as I told you; they begin by hanging a man and they try him afterwards.

MONSIEUR DE POURCEAUGNAC.

But I call that unlawful law.

SBRIGANI.

It is cruel as all the devils; particularly on crimes like yours.

MONSIEUR DE POURCEAUGNAC.

But I am innocent.

SBRIGANI.

That makes no difference; they don't trouble themselves about that. Besides, they have a deadly hatred in this town for the men from yours; they will be only too delighted to hang a Limousin.

MONSIEUR DE POURCEAUGNAC.

What harm have the Limoges people done them?

SBRIGANI.

These Parisians are brutes, enemies to the courtesy and merit of other towns. As for me, I own that I am horribly alarmed about you; I should never console myself if you happened to be hanged.

Monsieur de Pourceaugnac.

It is not so much the fear of death that makes me fly as the disgrace to a noble of being hanged. Such an example would cast a slur upon our titles of nobility.

Sbrigani.

You are right; they would even deny you the title of esquire. Now then, study your part; endeavor, when I lead you by the hand, to walk like a woman and assume the language and manners of a woman of quality.

Monsieur de Pourceaugnac.

You can trust me for that; I have often seen persons of style. The only trouble is I have a beard.

Sbrigani.

Oh, the beard is nothing; some women have more than you. Now begin, and let me see how you do it. (*Monsieur de Pourceaugnac imitates a lady of quality.*) Good!

Monsieur de Pourceaugnac.

Come! my carriage! Where 's my carriage? Heavens! how miserable it is to have such servants! Am I to wait all day upon the pavement? Will no one call my carriage?

SBRIGANI.

Very good indeed!

MONSIEUR DE POURCEAUGNAC.

Hola! ho! coachman! little page! Ha! the rascal! how I 'll whip him when I get home — page! little page! Where 's my little page? Can't he be found? Won't somebody bring me my little page? Have n't I any little page in all the world?

SBRIGANI.

That is admirable. But I notice one thing: your coif is rather open; it exposes you too much. I 'll get you something closer to hide your face, in case of a luckless meeting —

MONSIEUR DE POURCEAUGNAC.

A meeting! what would become of me?

SBRIGANI.

Wait for me here; I 'll be with you in a moment. Walk up and down while waiting.

Monsieur de Pourceaugnac takes several turns across the stage endeavoring to imitate a woman of quality.

SCENE THIRD

Monsieur de Pourceaugnac, two Porters

First Porter, *not seeing M. de Pourceaugnac.*

Come, let us hurry, comrade; we must be off to the Grève if we want to see the execution of Monsieur de Pourceaugnac, who has been condemned by an ordinance to be hanged by the neck.

Second Porter, *not seeing M. de Pourceaugnac.*

We had better hire a window.

First Porter.

I hear that they have erected the fine new gallows to string up this Pourceaugnac.

Second Porter.

'T is a great pleasure, i' faith, to see a Limousin hanged.

First Porter.

Yes, yes; I 'll like to see him kick his heels in the air before all the town.

Second Porter.

He 's a pretty fellow! They tell me he has been married three times.

First Porter.

The devil! why does he want three women to himself? One is enough.

Second Porter, *seeing M. de Pourceaugnac.*

Ah ! good-day to you, mamselle.

First Porter.

What are you doing here alone, mamselle?

Monsieur de Pourceaugnac.

I am waiting for my servants, messieurs.

Second Porter.

She 's handsome, i' faith !

Monsieur de Pourceaugnac.

Gently, gently, monsieur.

First Porter.

Won't you come for a jaunt with us, mamselle? We 'll show you a pretty little hanging, I promise you.

Monsieur de Pourceaugnac.

No, I thank you.

Second Porter.

A nobleman from Limoges; and they are going to hang him prettily on the fine new gallows.

Monsieur de Pourceaugnac.

I have no curiosity.

First Porter.

Hey! you are a mighty pretty wench to be alone in the streets —

Monsieur de Pourceaugnac.

Gently, I tell you.

First Porter.

Faith, I 'd like to have you in my arms — so, come along!

Monsieur de Pourceaugnac.

Ha! this is intolerable! Such insults can't be offered to a woman of my quality.

Second Porter.

Let her alone, you! she is mine for a pistole.

First Porter.

No, I shall not let go of her.

Second Porter.

Yes, you will, I want her.

The two Porters drag at M. de Pourceaugnac violently.

Monsieur de Pourceaugnac.

Help! help! help!

SCENE FOURTH

MONSIEUR DE POURCEAUGNAC, TWO PORTERS, A POLICE OFFICER, TWO ARCHERS

POLICE OFFICER.

What does this mean? What violence is this? What are you doing to madame? Come, out of this place, unless you wish to be put in prison.

FIRST PORTER, *to Second Porter.*

Be off, for you can't have her.

SECOND PORTER.

Be off yourself, for you can't have her either.

SCENE FIFTH

MONSIEUR DE POURCEAUGNAC, THE POLICE OFFICER, TWO ARCHERS

MONSIEUR DE POURCEAUGNAC.

I am truly obliged to you, monsieur, for having delivered me from those insolent men.

POLICE OFFICER.

Hey! here 's a face that 's mighty like the one described to me.

Monsieur de Pourceaugnac.

It is not I, monsieur, I do assure you.

Police officer.

Ho! ho! what may that mean?

Monsieur de Pourceaugnac.

I don't know.

Police officer.

Why did you say that?

Monsieur de Pourceaugnac.

Oh! for nothing.

Police officer.

Such talk means something, and I take you into custody.

Monsieur de Pourceaugnac.

Oh, monsieur, don't; I beg of you.

Police officer.

Yes; by your looks and by your words I think you are that Monsieur de Pourceaugnac in woman's clothes for whom we are searching; you 'll come to prison at once.

Monsieur de Pourceaugnac.

Ah, me!

SCENE SIXTH

Monsieur de Pourceaugnac, Sbrigani, the Police officer, two Archers

Sbrigani, *to M. de Pourceaugnac.*

Oh, heavens! and what does all this mean?

Monsieur de Pourceaugnac.

They have discovered me.

Police officer.

Yes, yes; and I am glad of it.

Sbrigani, *to Police officer.*

Ah, monsieur, for love of me! you know what friends we have been so long! I conjure you not to take him to prison.

Police officer.

No; impossible for me to listen to —

Sbrigani.

But you are so accommodating! is there no way of settling this with a few pistoles?

Police officer, *to his archers.*

Withdraw to a little distance.

SCENE SEVENTH

Monsieur de Pourceaugnac, Sbrigani, Police officer

Sbrigani, *to Monsieur de Pourceaugnac*

You must give him money to let you go. Quick, quick!

Monsieur de Pourceaugnac, *giving money to Sbrigani.*

Ah, cursèd town!

Sbrigani, *giving the money to Police officer.*

Here, monsieur.

Police officer.

How much?

Sbrigani, *counting it.*

One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten.

Police officer.

No, my orders are too strict.

Sbrigani, *to Police officer, who turns to call his archers.*

Oh, heavens! wait, wait! (*To Monsieur de Pourceaugnac*) Make haste and give him more.

Monsieur de Pourceaugnac.

But —

Sbrigani.

Make haste, I say; don't lose a moment; there 's no great pleasure in being hanged.

Monsieur de Pourceaugnac, *giving more money to Sbrigani.*

Ah!

Sbrigani, *to Police officer.*

Here, monsieur.

Police officer, *to Sbrigani.*

I shall be forced to fly myself; there 'll be no safety for me here. Let *me* guide him out of the town, and do not stir yourself.

Sbrigani.

In that case I entreat you to take the greatest care of him.

Police officer.

I promise you not to leave him until I have put him in a place of safety.

Monsieur de Pourceaugnac, *to Sbrigani.*

Farewell; you are the only honest man I have found in this town.

Sbrigani.

Don't lose time. I like you so much I wish you were already leagues away. Heaven guide your steps! (*Alone*) Upon my word! a dupe indeed! But here comes —

SCENE EIGHTH

Oronte, Sbrigani

Sbrigani, *pretending not to see Oronte.*

Ha, what a strange adventure! What painful news for a father! Poor Oronte! how I pity him. What will he say? How can he bear this mortal sorrow?

Oronte.

What is it? What sorrow are you foretelling me?

Sbrigani.

Ah! monsieur, that deceitful Limousin, that traitor of a Monsieur de Pourceaugnac, has abducted your daughter.

Oronte.

Abducted my daughter?

SBRIGANI.

Yes; she became so crazy about him that she leaves her home and father to follow him. They tell me he 's a man of a nature to make the women love him.

ORONTE.

Quick, quick to justice! Send archers after them.

SCENE NINTH

ORONTE, ÉRASTE, JULIE, SBRIGANI

ÉRASTE, *to Julie.*

No, you must come, in spite of what you wish; I intend to place you in your father's hands. Here, monsieur, is your daughter, whom I have dragged by force from the man with whom she was eloping. I did so, not from love of her, but for your sake only; after this act on her part I ought rather to despise her and cure myself forever of the love I bore her.

ORONTE.

Ah! wretched girl that you are.

ÉRASTE, *to Julie.*

How could you treat me thus after all the proofs of friendship I have given you? I do

not blame you for submitting to your father's will, for he is wise and most judicious in all he does. Never shall I complain of *him* for discarding me in favor of another man. If he broke his word, he had good reason for it: they made him think that other was richer than I by four or five thousand crowns; and four or five thousand crowns is a sum for which it is worth while a man should break his word. But for *you* to forget, in a moment, all the ardor I have shown you, to flame with love at once for the first new-comer, to follow him shamefully without your father's leave, — a man to whom such crimes have been imputed! Behavior such as that is blamed by every one; my heart cannot reproach you too severely.

Julie.

Well, yes! I have conceived a love for Monsieur de Pourceaugnac, which made me follow him because my father chose him for my husband. Whatever you may please to say, he is a worthy man, and all the crimes they put upon him are monstrous falsehoods.

Oronte.

Be silent! you are insolent; and I know better than you the truth of this affair.

JULIE.

'T is all a trick they played upon him, and *(pointing to Éraste)* perhaps 't was he who planned this artful means to disgust you with him.

ÉRASTE.

I! could I be capable of that?

JULIE.

Yes, you.

ORONTE.

Hold your tongue, I tell you; you are a silly fool.

ÉRASTE.

No; do not imagine I have any wish to hinder this marriage; or that my former passion made me pursue you. As I said before, it was the deep respect I feel for your father; I could not endure that an honest man like him should be exposed to all the shame of scandals that attend an act like yours.

ORONTE.

Seigneur Éraste, I am much beholden to you.

ÉRASTE.

Farewell, monsieur. Formerly I had all the desire in the world to enter your alliance; I did my best to obtain that honor, and I have been

unfortunate; you have not judged me worthy of your favor. But that will not hinder me from retaining the sentiments of esteem and veneration which I feel for your character, and though I am not able to become your son-in-law, I must, at least, remain eternally your servitor.

Oronte.

Stay, Seigneur Éraste, stay! Your conduct has touched me to the soul, and I hereby give you my daughter in marriage.

Julie.

I will *not* have any husband but Monsieur de Pourceaugnac.

Oronte.

And I will — I — that you shall marry Seigneur Éraste. Here, give your hand.

Julie.

No, I will not.

Oronte.

I 'll box your ears.

Éraste.

No, monsieur, no, I beg of you; do her no violence.

ORONTE.

'T is her duty to obey me. I shall show myself the master of her conduct.

ÉRASTE.

But you see the love she feels for that other man; you surely would not have me possess her person while another has her heart?

ORONTE.

It is a spell which he has cast upon her. You will see her change her mind erelong. Come, give me your hand.

JULIE.

No; I—

ORONTE.

Hey, what a fuss! Here, your hand, I say. Oh, oh!

ÉRASTE.

Do not suppose it is for love of you I take your hand; it is your father whom I admire and wed.

ORONTE.

I am greatly obliged to you; and I increase my daughter's marriage portion by ten thousand crowns. I will send for a notary to draw up the contract.

Éraste.

And while we await him, let us enjoy the amusement of the season, and call in those masks who, from all quarters of the town, are flocking hither to attend the wedding of Monsieur de Pourceaugnac.

SCENE TENTH

A Troupe of Masks, *dancing and singing.*

A Mask, *dressed as a gypsy-woman.*

Away! away! away!
Sadness and grief and care!
Come hither, pleasures gay,
Love, smiles, and all things fair,
Laughter and gamesome air!
For pleasure rules the day!

Chorus of Masks, *singing.*

We 'll all be gay, be gay,
For pleasure rules the day!

The Gypsy-woman.

Follow, each and all;
On with ardor press;
Lovers' hopes and fears
All your hearts oppress:
But if your love holds fast
Your happiness will last.

A Gypsy-man.

Love shall endure till death,
Our reason wills it so;
Without Love's vital breath
What were this life below?

The Gypsy-woman.

Our life we 'd gladly give
For love — by which we live.

The Gypsy-man.

For riches,

The Gypsy-woman.

Grandeur,

The Gypsy-man.

Power,
The envied pomp of kings,

The Gypsy-woman.

Without Love's crowning flower,
Are but the least of things.

Both together.

If love and faith hold fast,
Then happiness shall last.

Chorus of Masks.

Sing! sing! sing all together!
Merrily dance and play;
Here when we meet for wedding joy
The wisest those who gayly toy
With folly by the way.

All Together.

Then let us all be gay, be gay,
The great affair of life is Joy.

END OF MONSIEUR DE POURCEAUGNAC

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